THEOLOGY OF THE CULTUS OF THE SACRED HEART

A MORAL, DOGMATIC AND HISTORICAL STUDY.

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the Sacred Sciences at the Catholic University of America in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate in Theology.

By the

Rev. Joseph Julius Charles Petrovits, J. C. B., S. T. L.
Of the Diocese of Harrisburg.

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PREFACE.

The modern educational tendency towards specialization has inspired many exhaustive treatises on the principal dogmas of the Catholic faith, and the more profound study this tendency has entailed has given rise to separate tracts on Christology, Soteriology, Mariology, Eschatology, and others. In this way, the fundamental truths of the Christian religion have been clarified and developed, and many hitherto untouched points of controversy have been brought out into clear relief. The influence of the scientific investigation of the past century has no doubt been felt in theological circles, and the religious field, instead of suffering from the advance of our scientific knowledge, has been strengthened by the addition of numerous works which prove more forcibly than ever how impossible is any conflict between dogmatic truth and the truth of science, when properly and impartially approached. The content of religious knowledge knows no frontiers. It draws its sources from the inexhaustible ocean of the Infinite, and the subjective development of dogmatic truth shows how adequately Christianity satisfies all the spiritual wants of the human heart. Among these

developments, none has occupied a wider share of attention than the origin and growth of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The diffusion of this Devotion meets a want which is especially evidenced in the spirit of the present day. That there is an unholy emotionalism, or better, an unhealthy sentimentalism which is undermining the basic factor of man's relation to God, is admitted by all who realize that the psychological factor of religious belief needs constantly to be guided into the proper channels. No Devotion of the Church has a more potent force within itself to satisfy the longing of man's heart for union with God than the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In a certain measure, this Devotion has not been given the recognition it deserves from present-day theologians. Comparatively small contribution of a scientific value can be attributed to English writers on this subject. Many of its features have been described by writers in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, but few of these works have been made accessible to English readers. And yet no Devotion comes so closely to the very essence of the character of those who speak, write and read English today. The field of speculation such a study opens up is filled with numerous attractive aspects wherein each one can labor and harvest himself the particular spiritual reward which is calculated to satisfy the individual desire for more intimate knowledge of the Saviour.

No words are necessary to prove the importance of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Through the captivating symbol of the

Heart, it commemorates that boundless love which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity showed forth in the work of Redemption. That it ought to be one of the most beloved devotions in the Church is evident from the fact that it forms so palpably a connecting bond between the Creator and the creature, between the Saviour and the human race He has redeemed.

The Devotion to the Sacred Heart is therefore a special form of worship given to the love of our Blessed Lord as symbolized by His Heart. To relate the story of the beginning and the development of this Devotion, to explain its theological basis, and to present to the reader its more important features, is the purpose of this volume. As a tentative explanation in English of the numerous questions involved in a theological and historical discussion of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, the work will be welcomed by all those who take an interest in the literature on the subject, since it is the first time such a discussion has been given in that tongue.

In the opening chapters the reader is introduced to the historical facts which thread their way through the rise and growth of this Devotion. Then follow a series of chapters on the constitutive elements of the Devotion itself, and a final section of the work deals with such practcial question as the Devotion of the Nine Fridays or the Twelfth Promise.

Not all the theology on this subject has assumed a definite mould; many problems still remain in their original controversial dress, and the absence of any official definition on the part of the Church

explains the freedom with which certain questions have been treated. Naturally, every good Catholic will make the distinction necessary between what is certain and what is still undefined in this Devotion. In all, however, our attitude is submitted to the authority of the Church, which is and ever will be the pillar and ground of truth.

With the intention of making a public act of faith, the work is dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and its pages are placed under the protection of the Divine Master, in the hope that this humble attempt at describing the Devotion will be productive of good in the hearts of the faithful.

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CHAPTER I

THE PRIMARY OBJECTS OF WORSHIP.

ADUMBRATIONS OF THE CULT OF THE SACRED HEART.

The anthropologists of our time agree that even the pagan nations worship a superior being. Their statements are founded upon the science of comparative religions. The early Fathers of the Church came to the same conclusion from their knowledge of pagan literature and customs. Their observations based on the facts of pagan history proved the untenableness of Descartes' excessive intellectualism concerning the idea of God. It is now generally admitted that all the nations had more or less a clear idea of a relatively superior being whom they worshipped as Creator, Supreme Ruler, Preserver, Supernatural Force and Power. All these concepts are spontaneous with man, for he cannot fail to realize his dependence on One Whose existence is eloquently proclaimed by the "good things that are seen," [1] and of whom the royal psalmist chants the beautiful strain "the Heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands." [2]

In the Old Testament the Jewish nation alone had a true knowledge of the true God, and worshipped Him as He commanded. This worship was not the most perfect that man was capable of rendering to his Creator, for some of its acts were only prototypes of the higher cult which the Son of God came to establish. By the light which Christ brought down from heaven we were helped to form a clearer knowledge of God and of His relation to mankind. The divine manifestations which accompanied His teaching became irresistible

[1] *Wisdom,* XIII, 1.

[2] *Ps.* XVIII, 1.

criteria of credibility. He gained adherents, selected twelve Apostles, and founded a spiritual kingdom on earth. He perfected the former worship by retaining some of its phases, and abolished others, introducing new ones in their place. Christianity thus supplanted Judaism. Finally, He laid down His life—as a victim of love—in order to satisfy divine justice, and to restore the race to its lost supernatural status and privileges. Thus, he became the object of a special worship on account of the infinite love visualized in the work of His Incarnation and Redemption. A Christian's worship of Christ, therefore, ought to be just as spontaneous as the worship shown to God by one who never heard of the mysteries of Redemption.

The above two worships, viz., of God and of the Incarnate Word, belong to the very essence of religion. They are the two sources from which all devotions practiced by the faithful and approved by the Church originate. All the honors thus externalized redound ultimately to their glory. Every act of homage is calculated to terminate in them directly or indirectly. Even when we honor a Saint, as a proximate object, our homages in their final analysis must refer to a remote object, viz., God, Whose goodness and sanctity is reflected in His Saint. Hence, it follows, that a devotion having a theological justification, does not detract from the external glory of God simply because He is not its proximate object. The history of the various devotions shows this principle to have been adopted by the Church. In our own days one could point out many objects of worship which were unknown in the early ages of Christianity except in so far as it is possible in certain instances to detect adumbrations.

There were private devotions in the past, of which, for a time, the Church took no official cognizance. With such, as a rule, it does not concern itself unless they are of such dangerous character as to necessitate an interference in order that the spiritual

welfare of the individual may not be jeopardized. History proves that the Church has never failed to make an authoritative pronouncement of commendation or reprobation when a new devotion became extensively diffused. Being the depository of truth, the supreme guardian of matters touching things spiritual, its voice was always heard when a tendency, not in conformity with revelation and tradition, was perceptible within the fold. To substantiate this fact it will suffice to bear in mind the many propositions it condemned, the dogmas it clearly defined, the false teachings it interdicted, the numerous devotions it discountenanced, and the many heretics it anathematized. The Church is the official judge as to the legitimacy of any certain cult or devotion.

The history of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is an example showing that the Church exercises all possible precaution in this matter before a final judgment is pronounced. It is not the purpose of this work to present a lengthy historical treatise. We must content ourselves with what is absolutely necessary in order that we may be enabled intelligently to connect with its history those aspects which are to claim our special attention.

Pius IX expressed the belief that Christ selected Blessed Margaret Mary for the office of introducing the devotion to the Sacred Heart.[1] All the theologians agree that in consequence of her revelations the devotion received an irresistible impetus, and they helped toward determining its material and formal object. With this fact in our possession, we shall divide our historical treatise into three periods. In the first, we shall endeavor to point out some foreshadowings of the devotion to the Sacred Heart from the early ages of Christianity, and the form in which it existed

[1] "Iamvero ad tam salutarem, ac debitum pietatis cultum instituendum eligere Servator noster dignatus est Venerabilem famulam suam Margaritam Mariam de Alacoque" . . . (*Decr. Beatif.*, ANAL. IUR. PONT., ser. 7, an. 1864, col. 934).

before the time of Blessed Margaret Mary. In the second period we shall mark the progress it made during her life, and in the third we shall dwell briefly on its growth after the death of the Beata.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart as it is propagated in our time consists of two distinct elements, viz., formal and material. The love of Christ is the formal, and His Heart the material element. For a long time these two elements, separated from each other, were objects of a special individual worship. At the end of the thirteenth century they became united, and as such, formed the earliest phase of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In the following paragraphs we shall make an attempt to trace them individually to the early ages. In the course of our investigation we shall endeavor to show how the faithful brought them into correlation, and finally united them as two objects of one devotion.

The formal element of this devotion is older than Christianity. It is founded on the words of Moses directed to the Israelites: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength." [1] A further step in its development is heralded by St. John: "For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son." [2] The faithful believing that "the Word was made flesh" [3] and "confessing that Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh, is of God" [4] began to pay a special tribute of love to Him.

Christ assured mankind of His love toward men.[5] He proved this love by laying down His life for us.[6] The consideration of this deep mystery brings to the lips of St. Paul the well-known protestation: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" [7]

[1] *Deut.* VI. 5.
[2] *John* III. 16.
[3] *John* I. 14.
[4] I. *John* IV. 2.
[5] *John* XV. 9.
[6] I *John* II. 16.
[7] *Rom.* VIII. 35.

The same Apostle in his characteristic way expresses the convictions of the Christians of his day: "He died for all,[1] and if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." [2]

We need not cite more passages of the Sacred Scripture to prove that the early Christians considered the love of Christ as the essence of their religious belief. The sufferings He underwent for our salvation and His death on the cross, are indicated as the motives which actuated this love of the appreciative redeemed believers toward the Person of the Redeemer. The piercing of the Heart, which, by anticipation, was to be a partial contributory cause of our redemption was the last scene of that awful drama which the Saviour of mankind enacted on the stage of the world in order to fulfill His divine mission.

This Heart is the material object of our devotion. The mystic signification attached to It combined with the popular belief which viewed It as the seat of all affections, were instrumental in promoting the special honors which It received. We shall succeed in tracing this material object to the early ages of Christianity by a brief presentation of the different devotions in honor of the Passion of Christ. It can be proved that in *sensu cumulativo* the Heart of Christ was worshipped ever since It was pierced on the Cross. We do not mean to assert that this worship was something explicit. We only mean to intimate that it was included implicitly in other devotions until, finally, It became crystallized as a separate object.

A. Among the first devotions of the early Christians the one to the *Passion of Christ* stands out prominently. The Sacred Scripture makes frequent references to the incontestible truth of Christianity: "Christ died for us, we being now justified by His blood." [3] Since, therefore," Christ the just died for us the unjust,[4] we have

[1] II. *Cor.* V. 15.
[2] I. *Cor.* XVI. 22.
[3] *Rom.* V. 9.
[4] I. *Peter* III. 18.

reason to rejoice in our sorrow and trials, for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us so also by Christ does our comfort abound.[1] Christ was the author of our salvation by His Passion,[2] and we see Jesus, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor,[3] and to Him who washed us from our sins in His own blood be glory and empire for ever and ever, Amen."[4] It was the suffering and the shedding of blood by which our redemption was accomplished that inspired the earliest worship of Christ. But no man will deny that in these sufferings, and particularly in the shedding of blood, the Heart of Christ had a considerable share. Therefore, in a cumulative sense, it inevitably participated in the reverence and honors paid in consequence of them.

B. The devotion to the *Passion of Christ* assumed a new phase when the faithful commenced to pay a special homage to the five principal wounds of His sacred body. The words of St. Ambrose (d. 397), besides being expressive of a deep sense of piety, attribute to these wounds a power of impetration. "Christ refused to relinquish the wounds He received for us," he says, "and preferred to take them with Him in order to exhibit them to His Heavenly Father."[5] St. Peter Chrysologus (d. 450), while commenting on the words with which the risen Savior wishes to change the unbelieving heart of His doubting Apostle, makes a striking reference to these wounds. "May these wounds," he remarks, "which have already shed water for the cleansing and blood for the redemption of mankind, spread the light of faith in the whole universe."[6] A

[1] II. *Cor.* I. 5.

[2] *Hebrews* II. 10.

[3] *Hebrews* II. 9.

[4] *Apoc.* I. 6.

[5] "Quod vulnera suscepta pro nobis coelo inferre maluit, abolere noluit, ut Deo Patri nostrae pretia libertatis ostenderet." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. XV, col. 1846.)

[6] "Ut effundant toto orbe haec vulnera fidem, quae aquam in lavacrum, sanguinem in omnium pretium iam fuderunt." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. LII, col. 439.)

tender tribute is paid to these wounds by St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) in his *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles.* "For as the dove," he says, "seeks nutrition in hollow places, so the pious soul, in order to regale herself, finds nourishment in the wounds of Christ." [1]

From the above three quotations, to which we could add many others, it is evident that a devotion to the *Five Wounds* existed in the early ages though—on account of the scarcity of historical documents—we are not in a position to determine the extent of its popularity. Suffice it to say that the indefatigable zeal of St. Bernard (d. 1153), and St. Francis (d. 1226), as well as the religious enthusiasm of the Crusaders returning from the Holy Land contributed considerably to its diffusion.[2]

Perhaps the most ardent advocates of this devotion were St. Mechtilde (d. 1290) and St. Gertrude (d. 1302.) Their writings are full of references to the wounds of Christ. The motive which animated these devotees of this cult could not be stated more concisely than the *Memorial* of the Polish Bishops portrays it. "These parts of Our Lord's most sacred body are being held more deserving of a special cult than the others, precisely because, being decorated with these wounds as with illustrious marks of love, they underwent keener sufferings for our salvation. It is for this reason that they cannot be contemplated without deep feeling of religion and piety." [3]

Animated by such sentiments as the above words portray, the faithful directed repeated petitions to the Holy See requesting a special feast in honor of the sacred wounds of Christ. Finally, their efforts were crowned by Innocent VI in 1362. In France this devo-

[1] "Quasi columba in foraminibus, sic simplex anima in vulneribus nutrimentum quo convalescat, invenit." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. LXXIX, col. 499.)

[2] HOLWECK *in the Cath. Enc. art., Wounds.*

[3] NILLES, *De ratione festorum SS. Cordis Jesu et Mariae,* I. 126.

tion receives its first official recognition in the Synod of Lavaur, held on May 17, 1368, under the Pontificate of Urban V, in the Cathedral of Lavaur, at the request of Pierre de la Jugie, Archbishop of Norbonne. At this Synod an indulgence of thirty days was granted to those who recite five Our Fathers in honor of the *Five Wounds* of Christ. The wound of the Sacred Side was one of these *Five Wounds*. The tradition handed down by the popular mind as well as by the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church believes the wound of the Sacred Side and Heart to have been inflicted simultaneously. Hence, the two were considered as one, and included as such in the devotion to the *Five Wounds*. These organs of the sacred body were considered deserving of a special homage not only because they were visibly effected by external anguish, but also because through them oozed the precious blood, the prize of our Redemption. Thus, we find a trace of a worship paid to the Sacred Heart, in an implicit cumulative sense, in the devotion to the *Five Wounds*.

C. While the above devotion continued to spread it was noticeable that of the *Five Wounds* one enjoyed more popularity than the rest.[1] The *Side of Christ* suffered an indelible wound by the spear of a soldier.[2] It was to this *Side* Christ pointed, when, after His Resurrection, He was desirous of inspiring His apostles with peace, consolation and courage.[3] Of all the wounds, this was the deepest; of all this the most prominent. St. Gregory (d. 604) alludes to it in his *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles*. "By the hollow places of the wall," he says, "we understand the *Side of Christ* which was opened by the lance." [4] It was through this hallowed *Side* that

[1] KELLER, S. J., *Die fünf Wundmale des Herrn.* (In the *Zeitschrift für Kath. Theol.*, 1893, p. 582.)

[2] *John* XIX. 34.

[3] *John* X. 22.

[4] "Per foramina autem petrae, vulnera manuum et pedum Christi in cruce pendentis libenter intellexerim. Cavernam vero maceriae, vulnus lateris, quod lancea factum est, eodem sensu dixerim." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. LXXIX, col. 499.)

the last drops of blood were shed, as a final testimony of love elicited by the God-Man, toward those whose cause He was so eloquently pleading before the throne of His Heavenly Father. Hence, nothing is more natural than that it should attract a very special attention. The deep devotion St. Augustine (d. 430) entertained toward the *Sacred Side* can be gauged by the following words. "The Evangelist fittingly states that the soldier opened His *Side,* in order that in It, so to speak, may be opened the gate of life, through which issued the Sacraments of the Church, without which no one can enter the path leading to eternal life. Thus, the second Adam with a bent head [1] slept on the cross that a Spouse may be created for Him issuing from His *Side.* What is there purer than this blood? What more healing than this wound?" [2]

It is not to be presumed that the devotion to the *Sacred Side* was exclusive of the Sacred Heart. Father Galliffet adduces some reasons of his own to prove that the lance of the centurion—after it pierced the Side of Christ—penetrated into His Sacred Heart.[3] He also quotes from the writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis de Sales, and others, who share his belief. Hence, we may reasonably suppose that the two wounds, viz., that of the Side and the Heart of Christ, were never disassociated, but honored always unitedly.

D. From the foregoing we can see how gradually and instinctively the popular mind was drawn nearer and nearer to the Sacred

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[1] John XIX. 30.

[2] "Vigilanti verbo Evangelista usus est, ut non diceret, latus eius percussit, aut vulneravit, aut quid aliud; sed aperuit ut illic quodammodo vitae ostium panderetur, unde sancta Ecclesiae manaverunt Sacramenta, sine quibus ad vitam quae vera vita est non intratur. . . . Hic secundus Adam inclinato capite in cruce dormivit, ut inde formaretur ei conjux, quod de latere dormientis effluxit. O mors unde mortui reviviscunt. Quid isto sanguine mundius? Quid vulnere isto salubrius?" (MIGNE, P. L., tom. XXXV, col. 1953.)

[3] *The Adorable Heart of Jesus.* London, 1908. *Appendix,* Art. 2, p. 160.

Heart, which was destined to be the object of a favored cult. While the Sacred Heart, for a long time, was not proposed for worship as a separate object, nevertheless, the writings of the early Fathers contain many explicit allusions to It.

St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom speak repeatedly of the Sacred Side and the blood issuing from it, but—as far as we can ascertain—they make no explicit mention of the Heart of Christ. St. Paulinus of Nola (d. 431) is the first to mention it explicitly. He pictures St. John as resting his head on Jesus' breast, and drawing deep mysteries "from His Heart, as from the fountain of the creative Wisdom, being thereby inebriated by the Holy Ghost."[1] Perhaps the most striking words of any used by an early writer come down to us from St. Anselm (d. 1109), Archbishop of Canterbury. "What sweetness," he says, "in this pierced Side. That wound has revealed us the treasures of His goodness, that is to say, the love of His Heart for us."[2]

The words of St. Bernard reveal his deeply religious soul. "The lance," he maintains, "pierced His Side, and it penetrated into His Heart in order that from henceforth He may be induced to compassionate us in our infirmities; the secret of the Heart is exposed by the openings of the body."[3]

Abbot William (d. 1148) calls the Heart of Jesus "an assured refuge of mery,"[4] and the Abbot Gilbert of Holland (d. 1172)

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[1] "Johannes igitur beatus dominici pectoris cubator qui sensus creaturis omnibus altiores ex ipso creatricis omnium rerum corde sapientiae biberat, inebriatus Spiritu Sancto, ab ipso intimo et infinito omnium principiorum Evangelii fecit exordium." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. LXI, col. 252.)

[2] Dulcis in apertione lateris; apertio siquidem illa revelavit nobis divitias bonitatis suae, charitatis sui cordis erga nos." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. CLVIII, col. 762.)

[3] Ferrum pertransiit animam eius, et appropinquavit cor illius, ut non iam non sciat compati infirmitatis meis. Patet arcanum cordis per foramina corporis." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. CLXXXIII, col. 1072.)

[4] "In apertum ostium toti intremus usque ad cor tuum, Jesu, certam sedem misericordiae, usque ad animam tuam sanctam, plenam omnis plenitudinis Dei." (MIGNE, P. L., tom. CLXXXIV, col 155.)

exclaims: "The wound of the Heart displays the ardor of love. O truly sweet Heart which at the sight of our love is induced to give us love in return." [1]

In the *"Vitis Mystica,"* claimed by some to have originated from the pen of St. Bernard, by others from that of St. Bonaventure, we read that "this *Heart* was wounded in order that through this visible wound the invisible wound of love may be displayed. What other way could His ardent love be exhibited more effectively than by permitting the wounding of the body as well as of the Heart by a lance? The fleshy wound thus symbolizes the spiritual wound." [2]

Allusions of this character become more and more frequent as time advances. The ecclesiastical writers of the preceding centuries did not as yet unite the material and the formal object of this devotion for some give preference to the Heart, others again to the love It symbolizes. The two become united in the writings of St. Gertrude (d. 1302). After this Saint acquainted the world with the nature and the character of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the leaders in piety and learning penned thousands of passages extolling the Heart of Christ as the seat of love, wisdom, magnanimity, and all manifestations to which His human nature gave evidence during His terrestrial sojourn. Such utterances were then easily intelligible, for in those days the human heart was considered the fountain-head of all good and evil.

Our contemporary physiologists contradict this old tradition. For the time being it will suffice to say that many expressions and

[1] "Cordis vulnus vehementiam designat amoris. O vere dulce cor, quod nostris movetur affectibus ad repetendam vicissitudinem dilectionis." (MIGNE, P. L., tom CLXXXIV, col. 155.)

[2] Nihilominus et propterea vulneratum est (cor), ut per vulnus visibile vulnus amoris invisibile videamus. Quomodo hic ardor melius ostendi potest, nisi quod non solum corpus, verum etiam ipsum cor lancea vulnerari permisit. Carnale ergo vulnus vulnus spirituale ostendit." (MIGNE, P. L., tom, CLXXXIV, col. 643.)

modes of speech, referring to the heart in practically all languages, convey a meaning that is not to be confined to the material heart exclusively, but must be interpreted as relating to our moral faculties. The word *heart,* and the functions falsely attributed to it by the popular as well as the scientific minds of the past, captivated many a contemplative soul long before the time of Blessed Margaret Mary. From the year 1072 to 1680, Father Chandlery enumerates 110 writers, and quotes some of their references to the Sacred Heart.[1]

The venerable Carthusian Lanspergius (d. 1539) and the pious Benedictine Louis de Blois (d. 1566) were instrumental in introducing the devotion among the ascetics.[2] Thus, the devotion gained entrance into the monastic life.

To diffuse it still more extensively among the laity, Father Hajnal (d. 1644), the celebrated Hungarian Jesuit, undertook to publish its *first* treatise in a book form. In his vernacular in 1629 he edited a work in Vienna, under the title *"Jézus Szentséges Szive tiszteléinek könyve."* [3] The Polish Jesuit, Father Druzbicki, followed in his footsteps with a work whose title was *"Meta cordium, Cor Jesu."* [4]

These two pioneers paved the way for the immediate precursor of Blessed Margaret Mary, viz., Father Eudes.

In the estimation of Father Le Doré, Father Eudes justly merits to be called the first apostle of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.[5] The two Congregations and the Seminary Chapel he founded were placed under the protection of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. In 1670 he edited a work entitled *"La dévotion au*

[1] CHANDLERY, S. J., *Friends and Apostles of the Sacred Heart, from the fourth to the nineteenth century.* Benziger Bros., 1915.

[2] BAINVEL, *Coeur Sacré de Jésus.* (In the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* VACANT, col. 313.)

[3] *Book for the lovers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

[4] BAINVEL, *op. cit.,* col. 314.

[5] See his work *Le Père Eudes, le premier Apôtre des SS. Coeurs de Jésus et Marie,* Paris, 1870.

Coeur adorable de Jésus," in which he inserted an Office and Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart. The same year it received the approbation of three Bishops. He established a feast of the Sacred Heart and the Mass and Office composed by him were read. Father Le Doré quotes the words of approbation of Bishop de Loménie de Brienne,[1] and those of Bishop de Maupas de Tour.[2] It is evident from these citations that their conception of the devotion was practically the same as it exists in our own era. On July 25, 1680, Father Eudes finished his work entitled, *"Coeur admirable de la très sainte Mère de Dieu."* The last of the twelve books is devoted exclusively to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Father Le Doré, commenting upon this work, says: *"C'est un excellent traité de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur du Fils de Dieu."* [3] Father Eudes was declared Venerable by a decree issued on January, 1904, and honored with the title *"Auctor liturgici cultus SS. Cordium Jesu et Mariae."*

Père Bouvier, in his excellent article, maintains that Mgr. Languet[4] ignored the merit of this great forerunner of the Sacred Heart devotion. This statement is not founded on truth. Mgr. Languet, in the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, published in 1729,[5] pays a signal tribute to Père Eudes. He calls him "the most zealous hero of this illustrious devotion." He gives a summary of his life; enumerates some of his merits, and points out that the Office Father Eudes composed, was approved by the Archbishop of Rouen, by six Bishops, and a number of Doctors of the theological faculty of Paris. Clement X was so pleased with the religious enthusiasm

[1] *op cit.*, p. 129.
[2] *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 234.
[4] *Etudes Religieuses*, vol. LVI, p. 134.
[5] "Il a été un des plus zelés Heros de cette illustre dévotion (aux sacrés Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie) et l'a inspiré non seulement par ses pieux Ecrits, mais encore par l'érection de plusieurs dévotes Confrairies et Societés." (LANGUET, *op. cit., Discours*, p. 50.)

he displayed in this respect, that in 1674, he issued six Briefs of Indulgences in which all the Churches of his Seminaries were to participate in perpetuity. Notwithstanding the indefatigable zeal Father Eudes displayed, in order to spread and make known this devotion, the words of Père Allet may be repeated here with propriety: "Père Eudes did not receive from heaven a formal and authentic mission to establish the feast of the Sacred Heart for the universal Church. Irrespective of this privilege, however, he played an important role in its introduction." [1]

[1] Allet, *La France et le Coeur Sacré*, p. 237.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART IN THE PERIOD OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY

From the foregoing chapter, it is evident that the devotion to the Sacred Heart, in the time of Blessed Margaret Mary, was not confined to a narrow space or to a small community. It had already been disseminated through the writings of the Saints, and the preaching of learned and holy ecclesiastics. Though, in its present form, it was based on the revelations to Blessed Margaret Mary, we cannot help being struck by the similarity exhibited between our present practice and the one found in the writings of the Saints that lived before the time of the Beata. Hence, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the Visitation Convent of Paray-le-Monial, within the hallowed precincts of which the Beata spent twenty years of her life, was sheltering within its walls Visitandines who, before they entered the religious life, had never heard of such a devotion.

The order of the Visitation Nuns was established in 1607 by the combined efforts of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal. If we read the writings of these two holy persons, we cannot but be impressed by the sublime sentiments which they entertained toward the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The letters of St. Francis to Mother de Chantal, Superior of the first Visitandine Convent at Annecy, show an unbounded confidence in the Heart of our divine Lord. It seems that Divine Providence was guiding the celebrated Doctor of the Church in the establishment of this holy Congregation that contributed so much to the external glory of God.

On June 10, 1611, St. Francis wrote to Mother de Chantal: "I think, dear Mother, if you agree with me, we shall select for our coat-of-arms, a heart pierced with two arrows, encircled by a

crown of thorns, and surmounted by a cross, graven with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. The Saviour, when dying, gave us life by the opening of His Sacred Heart." [1] Such were the sentiments expressed by the holy founder sixty years before Blessed Margaret Mary received the habit. And on another occasion, being surrounded by his spiritual daughters in the "first little Gallery House," his lips gave utterance to the following words, actually prophetical in their bearing: "The other day contemplating in my prayer the open side of Our Lord, and gazing upon His Heart, it appeared to me that our hearts were surrounding His, He being the King of the hearts." [2] In another letter we find him describing for them the practice of certain virtues in order that "the incomparable privilege and grace of bearing the title of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart may be accorded to them." [3] We may well suppose that this correspondence which took place between such holy and revered persons, was read to the community for the edification and spiritual advancement of the nuns whose interest it was to serve.

The Convent of Paray, under the administration of the venerable Mother Hieronyme Hersant, sheltered from the world young girls from the most renowned families of Burgundy.[4] These wise virgins

[1] "J'ai donc pensé, ma chère mère, si vous en êtes d'accord, qu'il nous faut prendre pour armes un unique coeur percé de deux flèches, enfermé dans une couronne d'épines; ce pauvre coeur servant dans l'enclavure à une croix qui le surmontera. . . . Le Sauveur nous a enfantés par l'ouverture de son sacré Coeur." (Bougaud, *Histoire de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie*, Paris, 1875, ch. VIII, p. 181.)

[2] "L'autre jour en oraison, considérant le côté ouvert de Notre-Seigneur, et voyant son Coeur, il m'était avis que nos coeurs étaient tous alentour de lui, qui lui faisaient hommage comme au souverain roi des coeurs." (Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII, p. 184.)

[3] "Les religieuses de la Visitation qui seront si heureuses que de bien observer leurs règles pourront véritablement porter le nom de filles évangéliques, établies en ce dernier siècle pour être les imitatrices du Coeur de Jésus dans la douceur et l'humilité, base et fondement de leur ordre, qui leur donnera le privilège et la grâce incomparable de porter la qualité de Filles du Sacré Coeur de Jésus." (Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII, p. 187.)

[4] Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. IV, p. 90.

voluntarily placed between themselves and the attractions of the world the barrier of a cloister, for in their estimation fame, riches, and admiration, were so many dangerous weapons which the evil spirit employs to work our spiritual ruin. Such was the religious atmosphere permeating this Community, when, on May 25, 1671, the doors of its Sanctuary were opened and, in the words of the biographer of Blessed Margaret Mary, "the King of Love entering into the dear Paray, introduced therein His well-beloved." [1]

Space does not permit us to dwell at length on the life she led, the numerous humiliations that befell her by Divine Providence, the trying misconstructions and mortifications to which she was exposed. Amid all these difficulties, however, she participated in rare spiritual favors. The Divine Spouse signalled her out from among the rest, and destined her for a mission which was to be of inestimable benefit to mankind at large. No one can read her life without coming to the conclusion that Christ took a special delight in fashioning and moulding her character so as to make her a vessel of election. The simplicity with which she relates her conversation with Christ, the reports she gives of it to her Superiors, the extraordinary favors granted, the precaution taken to assure herself that she is not being misled by the evil spirit, the consultation she has with persons of learning and piety, are some of the factors which testify to the authenticity, reliability and credibility of the revelations narrated in her epistles. Her readiness to obedience and her submission are two most conspicuous and praiseworthy traits of her character. She is most eloquently and ably defended by the learned Bishop Languet. "For would the prince of pride," he says, "inspire humility? Would he prescribe obedience? Would he endeavor to procure love toward Jesus Christ? Would he give the humble Heart of Christ for our model?" [2]

[1] "Enfin, quand tout fut près, le 25 mai 1671, les portes du sanctuaire s'ouvrirent, et le Roi d'amour, entrant dans le cher Paray, y introduisit sa bien-aimée." (BOUGAUD, *op. cit.*, ch. IV, p. 108.)

[2] "Le Prince de l'orgueil inspire-t-il l'humilité? Prescrit-il l'obéissance? Cherche-t-il à accréditer l'amour de Jesus Christ, et à donner son Coeur humble et penitent pour modele?" (LANGUET, *op. cit., Discours,* p. 36.)

Blessed Margaret Mary was the object of much uncharitable criticism, being represented as one entertaining illusory visions, and possessing inexplicable peculiarities, yet, the inmates of the convent admitted that she practiced virtues in a heroic degree, and marvelled at her when they submitted her to uncalled-for tests.[1] The simplicity of her life, her probity and uprightness gradually captivated them, exerting a beneficient influence over them. Finally, she induced them to enroll themselves into an army which, under the leadership and the banner of the Sacred Heart, entered the arena to combat the rapidly spreading infidelity of France.

We can picture to ourselves the spiritual pleasure which inundated her heart, when, on the occasion of the anniversary of her feast, the novices surprised her by erecting a makeshift altar, and ornamented it with a picture on which the Heart of Christ was penciled, surrounded with flames.[2] This Friday, July 20, 1685, was the aurora of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. As the Superior of these novices, she prostrated herself before this symbol of love, her example being followed by her attendants. The little group of worshippers consecrated themselves to a special service in honor of the divine Heart.[3] Her soul overflowed with spiritual exaltation, and being anxious to secure more adorers to the Sacred Heart, she extended an invitation to some professed nuns, but was met with a refusal.[4]

From this day, however, it was manifest that her Divine Spouse would crown her efforts with success. Mother Greyfier, at this time Superior of the Community of Semeur, was her spiritual adviser till 1684. Being formerly at the head of the convent of Paray, she

[1] *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I., sec. III, *Procédure* 1715, pp. 443-566.

[2] Mgr. Gauthey. *La Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque,* ed. III, Paris, 1915, tom. I, p. 214.

[3] Languet, *La Vie de la Venerable Mère Marguerite-Marie,* Paris, 1729, p. 116.

[4] *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 215.

learned to admire Blessed Margaret Mary, and the Community of Semeur, as a consequence of her inspiring enthusiasm, embraced this devotion. We owe to Mother Greyfier the first miniature of the Sacred Heart. The Heart of Christ is represented on it as surrounded by flames in order to symbolize the burning love of the Saviour toward men, while the encircling thorns typified the fruits of His love.[1] This first miniature was sent to the Beata by the Community of Semeur. To show her gratification at the receipt of such an unexpected treasure, it will suffice to quote the words she penned in a subsequent letter. "It caused me joy, a thousand times greater than I would have felt had you placed me in possession of all the treasures of the world." [2]

As the contemplation of the cross was the contributory cause to much learning and Christian heroism, the almost uninterrupted reflections on the Sacred Heart inspired Blessed Margaret Mary with deep spiritual insight, the acquisition whereof cannot be explained without a divine intervention. Her ascendancy was not confined to the narrow walls of a convent. Her instructions given to novices, and the letters addressed to her different acquaintances are beaming with an unbounded affection toward the Sacred Heart. The thoughts and advices they contain give evidence of a striking familiarity with the principles of asceticism. With pleasing simplicity and frequency, does she picture to them the Heart of Jesus as the source of all love and the fountain of all generosity for men. It, indeed, was to her interest to stimulate this little flock with such sentiments, for they were to bring her work to completion, and to perpetuate it, after she had passed to her reward. That her con-

[1] *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 220.

[2] "Je ne puis vous dire la consolation que vous m'avez donnée, en m'envoyant son aimable représentation, comme aussi en voulant bien nous aider à l'honorer avec toute votre Communauté. Cette nouvelle me cause des transports de joie mille fois plus grands, que si vous me mettiez en possession de tous les trésors de la terre." (LANGUET, op. cit., liv. VI, p. 198; *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 221.

stancy was crowned with a notable success, is apparent from the fact that even those, who in the beginning were bitterly opposed to the introduction of such a devotion, became, finally, its most ardent devotees.[1]

The repeated apparitions of Christ in which He revealed to her the secret desires of His Heart, and instructed her what steps to take in order to convince even the most unbelieving, were to her the source of great consolation and strength in this onerous undertaking. There are four apparitions to which her biographers attribute a signal importance. They all receive a special mention in the Memoir written by *Les Contemporaines*.[2] The one of paramount importance took place in June, 1675.[3] In this last and most significant revelation, Christ apprises her that Father de la Colombière is to assist her in carrying out His designs. This devout Jesuit was no sooner informed of his arduous task than he became a zealous propagandist of the devotion. Even while yet at Paray, he commenced to inspire his penitents with a tenderness toward the Sacred Heart,[4] only to display more ardor in its promotion after his departure for England.[5] The unexampled readiness and enthusiasm with which he engaged in disseminating this devotion must have unfailingly exerted a considerable influence over the Visitandines of Paray, who fell within the sphere of his acquaintance, and it made itself felt also over those residing in other religious houses. Thus—through the combined efforts of these two zealous persons—the Community in which the Beata lived, became enamored of the devotion, and in 1685, was joined by the religious houses of Moulins, Dijon and Semeur creating a pious rivalry to outdo one another in the fervent homage paid to the Sacred Heart.

[1] Languet, *op. cit.*, p. 238; *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 252.
[2] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 121; 123; 126; 136.
[3] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. II, p. 102.
[4] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 138.
[5] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 139; and Bainvel, op. cit., col. 326.

Father de la Colombière was instrumental in introducing the devotion into the royal court of Paris. His writings, especially a work published in 1677, were received with admiration. Being full of rare unction, elevation and almost illimitable noble sentiments, they made a worshipper of the Sacred Heart of nearly every one that read them.[1] Finally, the Evangelical Daughters, as the Visitandines are styled, through Mother de Saumaise in 1688, received permission from the Ecclesiastical Superiors to render a solemn worship to the Sacred Heart in the Church of the Visitation of Dijon. Through the solicitude of this same Superior there was a booklet printed the same year at Dijon. It contained an Office and Litany in honor of the Sacred Heart, in the form of reparation for all the affronts Christ receives in the Blessed Sacrament. This brochure was reprinted at Moulins the following year and, after having been slightly amplified by Father Croiset, was widely diffused in the neighboring provinces and in Lyons. Several editions of it were exhausted the very same year.

Father Croiset, actuated by the incredible demand as manifested by the rapid disposal of so many repeated editions, conceived a project of writing a more comprehensive treatise on the devotion. It is likely that his plan was submitted to Blessed Margaret Mary. It not only met with her approval but, becoming his correspondent and co-laborer, her views of the devotion were incorporated into the monumental work which promised to be one of the most authentic and valuable that ever left the press. Alas, she was not to read its printed pages. As the work was nearing its completion Blessed Margaret Mary, after a holy life, fortified with the sacrament of Extreme Unction, died an edifying death, having received Holy Communion the day before. This took place on Oct. 17, 1690, when she was in her forty-third year.[2]

[1] LANGUET, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

[2] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 394, 466; and LANGUET, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION AFTER THE DEATH OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY

Father Croiset, whose learning and virtue merited the respect and admiration of his contemporaries, succeeded the Beta in the field of spreading the devotion.[1] The year following the death of Blessed Margaret Mary, he published his noteworthy contribution to the devotional literature on the Sacred Heart. It contained a concise presentation of the cult accompanied by a short life of the Beata. He gives us a few glimpses into her life, eulogising her virtues and extraordinary holiness. That he was well qualified to accomplish such a task no one, conversant with the incidents of his life, will question. He was the director of her conscience. With frank openness and child-like simplicity she revealed to him the secrets of her soul, and kept up a correspondence with him up to a short time before her death.[2]

The good effects which the reading of this book produced on the public at large were incalculable, nor can they be exaggerated. An unprecedented demand having been made for it, it was submitted to reprint at Bordeaux in 1694 by the authority of the Archbishop, and passed through a number of editions. In 1699 it was printed again at Besançon with the addition of a few pious reflections coming from the pen of Father Fromment, S. J. At Aurillac, it went through six consecutive reprints within a short period. At last, Father Croiset, exercising all the care and attention a work of this

[1] Bougard, *op. cit.*, ch. XIV, p. 354; Croiset, *La Dévotion au Sacré-Coeur*, Lyons, 1741, tom. II, p. 279.

[2] Croiset, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 278; also Galliffet, *The Adorable Heart of Jesus*, London, 1908, ch. II, p. 18.

nature would demand, once more revised and enlarged it. The result was the most reliable edition that has yet appeared. It was published at Lyons in 1698.[1] This contributed in a large measure to the growth of the devotion. Many chapels were erected in honor of the Sacred Heart. Some already constructed were placed under Its special protection. The feast began to be solemnized, as Christ desired, on the day after the Octave of Corpus Christi.

The cult was no longer confined to the narrow boundary lines of France. In 1697, Mary, the wife of James II, the de-throned king of England, sent a petition to Innocent XII requesting the establishment of a special feast and Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart for all the Visitation convents. Frigidianus Castagnorius pleaded her cause against Bottinius. The *Promotor Fidei* opposed it on the grounds of novelty. A permission, however was given to celebrate a Mass in honor of the *Five Wounds* on the day intimated.[2] Thus, the petitioners gained only a slight point. This apparent failure, however, did not place an obstacle to the growth of this devotion. On the contrary, it continued its spread with even greater rapidity than hitherto. In 1726, after a brief span of about thirty-six years, more than 300 Societies were erected in France, Flanders, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, and Bohemia, and its influence penetrated even beyond the sea into China, Persia, the Indies, Syria, Canada and the American Islands. It is estimated that throughout all these different countries more than 400 Confraternities could be reckoned.[3]

In the first chapter of the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, Mgr. Bougaud, deploring the political and moral conditions of France,

[1] Languet, *op. cit.*, p. 307. One of the editions of this work has been on the Index from March 11, 1704 to Aug. 24, 1887.

[2] Nilles, *De rationibus festorum SS. Cordis Jesu et purisimi Cordis Mariae*, Oeniponte, 1869, ch. I, p. 18.

[3] Galliffet, *op. cit.*, ch. II, p. 22; Languet, *op. cit.*, p. 310; Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVIII, p. 389.

predicted that this devotion would be a most efficient remedy against the numerous evils threatening her Christian heredity. The first French writers on this devotion like to represent France as being the object of a special predilection to the Sacred Heart. The pestilence of Marseilles which, in a short time, has reaped the harvest of nearly 40,000 souls offered a very singular occasion for fostering this devotion.[1] Our authority for the foregoing and subsequent statements is found in the Acts and Documents of that age, preserved and quoted in their entirety by Bishop Languet.[2] It was only after the saintly Bishop of Marseilles, Mgr. de Belsunce, consecrated his whole diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that the pestilence ceased its depredations. This took place in 1720. Two years later the same pest was raging again with an implacable fury, but as soon as the administrative body of laymen of that city signed an agreement by which they obligated themselves to promote the worship of the Sacred Heart to the best of their ability, the scourge stopped with incredible suddenness.[3] As a consequence of this miraculous occurrence, the devotion to the Sacred Heart took a deep root in the hearts of the French people, but especially of the inhabitants of the city of Marseilles.

The lion's share in the spread of this devotion is justly attributed to the classic and authentic life of Blessed Margaret Mary written by Bishop Languet and edited in 1729. Mgr. Bougaud, who, in 1874, engaged in a similar undertaking, makes the appropriate statement that Bishop Languet was eminently fitted for such a task. He knew Blessed Margaret Mary personally. Having been in frequent communication with Paray, he was also acquainted with her contemporaries in the convent life.[4] The learned author had a free

[1] Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVI, p. 392.

[2] *La Vie de la Venerable Marguerite-Marie*, Paris, 1729, pp. 385 ff.

[3] Languet, *op. cit.*, p. 312; Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVI, p. 392; Galliffet, *op. cit.*, ch. II, p. 23.

[4] Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVI, p. 393.

access to the *Memoirs* of the Beata, and refers to them with frequency. He quotes her letter quite extensively, describes her revelations, using her own simple language, gives an exact exposition of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and, with scholastic skill, he answers the objections hurled against it by its adversaries. Soon the cult began to spread to a new field along the shores of the Mediterranean.

In 1726, in Father Galliffet, the devotion had gained a new Apostle, who, in the same year, issued a most excellent work in Latin. At this juncture, Frederick Augustus, the king of Poland, Henry Belsunce, the Bishop of Marseilles, Philip, the king of Spain and others, seeing the popularity of the devotion and the numerous blessings which accrued from it, judged the time opportune for the renewal of the petition refused by Innocent XII on a previous occasion. Thus, Benedict XIII was asked for no less a favor than to establish the feast of the Sacred Heart for the universal Church.[1] All the circumstances looked very favorable to the cause of the petitioners. Cardinal Lambertini, afterward Benedict XIV, was acting as the *Promotor Fidei,* while Father Galliffet pleaded the cause of the petitioners. The arguments used against the introduction of such a feast were practically identical with those used thirty years before, viz., the case of the holiness of Blessed Margaret Mary was, as yet, pending, the Church must needs be on her guard in giving her approval to novelties, the acceptation of this devotion would give rise to many scandals and unreasonable requests, the devotion savors of Nestorianism, etc. These, and similar supposedly adverse reasons, militated against its introduction. Though, Father Galliffet gave a satisfactory answer to all these objections, Lambertini won the College of Cardinals to his view when he called their attention to the opinion that the devotion, as advanced, considered the heart as the source of all virtues and affections, the center of all internal

[1] Nilles, *op. cit.,* ch. II, p. 22.

pleasures and pains. This, he pointed out, involved a philosophical question from the settlement whereof the Church ought to abstain. Thus originated, the negative decision of the Sacred Congregation handed down on July 30, 1729.[1]

Notwithstanding all unfavorable comments, the devotion continued its uninterrupted progress. In 1733, it was transplanted to Constantinople. A few years later Bishop Languet's *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary* was translated into Arabic by Father Fromage, S. J.,[2] and the devotion to the Sacred Heart started on its triumphant conquest through the regions which once resounded with the echoes of the preaching of St. Paul.[3] In 1732, Father Galliffet revised his Latin work, and reissued it in French with many additions and improvements. His labor was crowned with unexpected success. The work was received with unparalleled enthusiasm, and shortly translations into Italian, German, Spanish, Polish and other tongues followed successively in its wake.[4]

The Jansenists, the most bitter opponents of this cult, saw the sanction of their opinions in the decision rendered by the Sacred Congregation in 1729. Never were they more elate nor more prodigal in the use of calumniating names and disparaging epithets. Now they became more intolerant than ever. *"Cordioles," "Alacoquists," "Idolaters,"* names to designate the worshippers of the Sacred Heart, were unceasingly on their lips.[5]

But no hostile resistance or barrier was sufficiently strong to check the progress of the devotion. New petitions were dispatched to Rome from the different parts of the world, from Poland, Spain, America, Germany, Italy and the Orient, requesting the granting

[1] Nilles, *op. cit.*, ch. II, p. 41.
[2] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, vol. I, p. 635.
[3] Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVI, p. 395.
[4] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 634 and 636.
[5] Bougaud, *op. cit.*, ch. XVI, p. 396.

of the desire which was refused on two previous occasions.[1] At last the *vox populi* which, in this case, appeared to be also the *vox Dei,* was on its way to victory. Pope Clement XIII resumed the cause at the instance of the Polish Bishops who, in their document, called the attention of the Head of the Church to the patent fact that there were at least 1090 Confraternities of the Sacred Heart erected all over the world. The cult was universally diffused, approved by numerous Bishops, accepted and encouraged by practically every religious congregation of that age. All this was urged as a justifiable ground for granting a special feast, Mass and Office. The request was granted for Poland and the Archconfraternity of Rome, on May 11th, 1765. Two months later the Visitation Nuns were favored with a similar privilege.[2] The new impetus given by this signal concession contributed more to the spread of the devotion than any other factor connected with its history except the subsequent beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, the decree of which was issued by Pope Pius IX on August 29th, 1864.

After this date, from time to time, other favors were bestowed on this Confraternity. In 1871, many petitions were sent to Rome to extend the feast to the universal Church, and to consecrate it to the Sacred Heart, but Pius IX was loath to act upon it. In 1875, Father Ramière, Director of the Apostolate of Prayer, dispatched a request to the Supreme Pontiff, signed by 525 Bishops, asking him to consecrate *Urbem et Orbem* to the Sacred Heart. He also urged that a day be specified on which this consecration should be renewed yearly.[3] Through a rescript given by the Sacred Congregation, the zealous Director was authorized to apprise the Bishops of the world that the Holy Father conceded a plenary indulgence to those who on June 16th, 1875, would consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart

[1] Bainvel, *op. cit.,* col. 338.
[2] Nilles, *op. cit.,* ch. III, p. 51 and 52.
[3] Bainvel, *op. cit.,* col. 340.

by reciting the formula composed by him. The then reigning Pontiff declined to take the initiative of consecrating the whole human race to the Sacred Heart.

During the Pontificate of Leo XIII, a letter reached the Vatican from Oporto, Portugal, written by the Superior of the Good Shepherd Nuns, known in the Community as Sister Mary of the Divine Heart. In this she maintained that Christ, in a supernatural vision, instructed her to inform His Vicar that he should consecrate the whole world to His Sacred Heart. Needless to say, all the requisite inquiry and mature consideration was given to this matter. Cardinal Jacobini communicated the result of his investigation to the Roman Pontiff, stating that the writer of the above mentioned epistle was regarded as a saint by all who came in contact with her, and that there was no reason to entertain a misgiving as regards her claim to an actual revelation.[1] On the strength of this declaration Leo XIII, with a formula composed and prescribed by him in 1899, acceded to this unexampled request, and this concession ever after he used to style the *"Great Act"* of his Pontificate.[2]

The extensive influence of this devotion is evidenced in the fact that, up to the present, at least sixteen different religious Communities were established by various founders who have selected the name of the Sacred Heart to serve as a special incentive and inspiration for their followers. There are, moreover, eleven distinct devotions all calculated to promote the honor and external glory of this object of love in some particular way.

From the foregoing short survey of the history of this devotion, it is manifest that a special Divine Providence was co-operating with the Church in order that it should attain the high distinction and popularity of which it is most deserving. At the present time the devotion is productive of unlimited good; it is widely diffused, and

[1] Bainvel, *op. cit.*, col. 342.
[2] Bainvel, *op. cit.*, col. 341.

occasions the salvation of many souls. This fact was appreciated by the great Pontiff when, in his Encyclical, he used the striking and most appropriate comparison: "In the past, a cross appeared to Constantine, a pledge of faith and victory. And, behold, to-day a new sign offered to our eyes, a token most auspicious and divine. Such is the Sacred Heart shining brilliantly amid flames. It is there we are to place all our hopes, it is from that Source we are to expect the salvation of mankind." [1]

[1] "Cum Ecclesia per proxima originibus tempora caesareo iugo premeretur, conspecta sublime adolescenti imperatori crux, amplissimae victoriae, quae mox est consecuta, auspex simul atque effectrix. En alterum hodie oblatum oculis auspicatissimum divinissimumque signum: videlicet Cor Jesu sacratissimum, superimposita cruce, splendidissimo candore inter flammas elucens. In eo omnes collocandae spes: ex eo hominum petenda atque expectanda salus. Leo XIII, Litt. Enc., die 25 Maii, An. 1899. *Acta Sanc.* S., vol. XXXI, p. 651.

CHAPTER IV

BASIS OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

In different periods of history mankind frequently experienced certain spiritual and material needs. To alleviate the burden of these needs God selected certain exceptional men and assigned them to a specified calling. One of the most noble missions, with which God vouchsafed to favor the children of men, was that of St. John the Baptist. St. John the Evangelist describes it in simple, but very graphic language. "This man," he says, "came for a witness, to give testimony of the light . . . which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." [1] This Light of the World, of whose fullness we have all received, became the life of the world; not only by the part He played in the act of creation and redemption, but also in having diffused the light of true knowledge. True knowledge, especially since the New Testament, is the moral life of the soul. It is in this sense that we are to expound the words of St. Paul directed to the Ephesians "for you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk then as children of light."[2]

The Light of the World, through His death, accomplished our Redemption. Therefore, He has a right to expect a reasonable service.[3] A reasonable service referred to a determined cult, implies three things, viz., a sufficient warrant for the worship, a familiarity with the reasons and nature of the devotion, and a proper use of the means whereby it is to be rendered. No devotion is officially approved by the Church without the first. To familiarize ourselves with the motives which ought to actuate us in a cult which we prac-

[1] *John* I. 7-8.
[2] *Ephes.* V. 8.
[3] *Rom.*, XII. 1.

tise, is a duty incumbent on all. The practice and discipline of the Church, combined with a good judgment, will guard us against going astray as to the third.

In the following chapters we shall attempt to apply the above three characteristics to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. We shall prove its legitimacy by presenting those christological and soteriological principles which underlie it, and on which it rests as a superstructure. We shall, furthermore, describe its nature by pointing out its material and formal object. Ever and anon we shall likewise hint at the means which the Church has approved and reserved for this particular worship.

Christ must be conceived as a divine Person subsisting in a human nature. He possesses a true human soul and a true human body, joined inseparably to His divine Person. Hence, follows the tessera of orthodoxy: "Godhead and Manhood are hypostatically united in Him." In consonance with the Sacred Scripture, revelation, tradition and the teaching of the Church, we are to attribute two natures and two wills to Him, viz., divine and human nature, divine and human will. According to the theory, called the Communication of Idioms in theological terminology, it is legitimate to transfer predicates and attributes from one nature to the other, with due limitation, but only in the concrete.

However, in order not to make a false step in applying this doctrine, we must not lose sight of the fact that the human body and soul of Christ are created; hence God's intrinsic essence is incommunicable to them. They, however, may partake of the objective sanctity of God, such as the divinity, majesty and adorableness of the Logos which immediately affects the moral grandeur of the Man Jesus, for they receive their excellence participatively from the divine Person subsisting in the human nature. Since the divine nature of Christ does not derive anything from his human nature, those other attributes which

belong essentially to the former cannot be communicated to the latter. The human nature of Christ has a certain infinite dignity, not because He endowed it with His intrinsic divine Essence, but, because He concealed under it the plenitude of His exalted infinite sublimity, and bestowed on it the effects of His divine operations.[1] On this hypostatic union of the divine Person to the human nature is based the adorableness of Christ's humanity as well as the infinite meritoriousness of all His acts. It is the infinite divine Person that performs the act as *principium quod,* through the instrumentality of His finite nature as *principium quo*. Thus, the physically finite act through the hypostatic union becomes endowed with a morally infinite value.

It is not our intention to enter into the discussion on the reality of Christ's corporal existence. St. Ignatius of Antioch, in the early part of the second century, in his letters of anti-Docetic tenor—whose genuineness is admitted even by such eminent non-Catholic critics as Harnack, Zahn, and Lightfoot,[2]—expounded and ably defended the true Incarnation of the Son of God. The Sacred Scripture and the condemnation of Docetism make the teaching of the Church unmistakably clear in this respect. The passion and human affections of Christ are the necessary postulates of His passibility and true human body.

The body of Christ is inseparably united to His divine Person. Whatever belongs to the Person substantially is to be honored with the self-same specific veneration as the Person Himself. The adorableness of Christ's human body rests solely no the hypostatic union. We do not adore it for its own sake, such an act would be blasphemous and idolatrous, for essentially it is only a creature. It is, however, the immediate terminus or object of divine worship,

[1] Humanitas Christi ex eo quod est unita Deo habet quandam dignitatem infinitam ex bono infinito quod est Deus. S. Thom. I, p. qu. 25, art. VI ad 4

[2] Harnack, *Expositor,* vol. III, ser. 3, p. 11.

i. e., we adore it in itself, on account of the dignity and nobility to which it is elevated by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Sophronius in the sixth plenary Council (680) gives expression to this teaching by stating that the animated and intellectual body of Christ is immutably deified.[1] The worship paid to the divine Logos does not differ, therefore, from the one offered to His sacred body. It must needs be one and the same, for it concerns one and the same Person, viz., latreutic.

But the divine Person is united hypostatically not only to the Humanity of Christ taken in its totality, but also as conceived in its several parts. Such constituent parts are, e. g., His sacred feet, His hands, His precious blood, His five wounds, His Heart, etc. Consequently, each and every one of these organic parts is deserving of adoration; not as considered separately by itself, but as viewed united to the Godhead. This teaching was upheld by Pius VI (1775–1799), who condemned the proposition of the pseudo-Synod of Pistoja, which maintained that a direct adoration of the Humanity of Christ, or, what is still less, a part of the same, is equivalent to rendering a divine honor to a creature. This doctrine was qualified as false, captious, injurious and detracting from that due cult which is exhibited and is to be rendered by the faithful to the Humanity of Christ.[2]

Thus, we have arrived at the desired inference, viz., the Sacred Heart of Christ—being the most noble organ of His divine body—is worthy of the same worship as His Divinity; provided, when adored, it is not considered abstracted from, but conjointly with His Person. It is in this sense that the Sacred Heart is proposed to our worship in the devotion of which we are treating. Christology thus gives us an idea of the nobleness of the organ which

[1] "Caro animata et intellectualis immutabiliter deificata." MANSI, tom. XI, actio XI, col. 475.

[2] Bull AUCTOREM FIDEI, *Bull. Rom. Con.*, vol. X, p. 2719.

forms the material object of our devotion. If we wish to inquire into the origin of its formal object, viz., love, we have to call to our aid the leading principle of Soteriology.

The Redemption of mankind was accomplished by the three divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity acting simultaneously, though—for the sake of easier realization—we attribute a different task to each of the three Persons. God the Father conceived the plan of mercy and justice. God the Son actuated by love and of His own free will volunteered to carry out the wishes of the Father. God the Holy Ghost through the instrumentality of Mary put into actual operation the will of both. Thus in the final analysis and by appropriation it may be said that it was the Holy Ghost, the *Donum Dei,* who has given mankind its most inestimable and perfect gift, the human nature of Christ through which we are to be reconciled to God.

There is a deep mystery hidden in this divine economy of the Incarnation and Redemption. The Holy Ghost is the term of the love which the Father and the Son from eternity entertain for each other He is the relation of Love personally subsisting in the Godhead, synonymous with Hypostatic Love, as the Son is synonymous with Hypostatic Wisdom. St. Ambrose does not hesitate to refer to the Holy Ghost as the *"Osculum Patris et Filii."* Thus the Incarnation, inspired as it was by love, by way of appropriation is referable to the Holy Spirit as its special ultimate efficient cause. This not only accentuates love as the leading motive operating throughout the whole work of Redemption, but establishes a reciprocal relation *ad extra* between the God-man and the Holy Ghost; a relation which did not exist before the Incarnation became a fact. For while in the creation of the Saviour's human nature, as in all operations *ad extra,* the three divine Persons acted as one principle, still in the historical sense of Scripture, the Holy Spirit seems to have been assigned a very special role.

God the Father selected the Blessed Virgin Mary, and prepared her body and soul for her exalted mission, but it was the Holy Ghost that "descended upon her." It was His power that "overshadowed her" [1] and caused to germinate in her womb that human nature which the Second Person assumed. Consequently the historical Jesus Christ, the God-man, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, for "as Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Goly Ghost." [2]

These considerations help us to realize the dignity and excellence of the human body of Christ even irrespective of His divine Person ,and especially in the light of the hypostatic union. They show us that the primary motive of the Redemption was love, and aid us to realize the quality of the principle which inspired the whole economy of the Incarnation. Jesus was conceived by Love, the Word became flesh for love of us; and all the subsequent acts of the God-man were an uninterrupted manifestation of a love so ardent that it induced Him to remain with us to the end of the world.

The principles enunciated in this chapter ought to be clearly borne in mind when we meet controversialists whose favorite objection lies in the gratuitous assumption and groundless imputation that the Church advocates a worship which has its sole foundation in the phantasmagoric illusions of a visionary nun. The Church has never approved a public cult unless it was in perfect harmony with faith and morals, Sacred Scripture, and tradition, independently of all private revelation. In the present instance the supernatural visions of Blessed Margaret Mary are only a contributory cause to the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. They contributed in a large measure toward its general acceptance, and promoted the

[1] *Luke* I. 35.
[2] *Matt.* I. 18.

definite formulation of its objects, but it does not depend on them for its theological basis. In a preceding chapter we have already proved that the devotion existed many centuries before the time of Blessed Margaret Mary. Occasional references may be found as early as the fifth century alluding expressly to the Sacred Heart. They become quiet frequent in the works of mediæval Saints and spiritual writers, and after the middle of the 15th century they are countless in number. From that time on the pictured and sculptured representations of the Sacred Heart are multiplying very rapidly.[1] The devotion assumed a fairly definite shape in the century immediately preceding that of Blessed Margaret Mary, and even merited the approbation of a number of local prelates. It is not an exaggeration to say that—irrespective of the supernatural manifestations with which Christ deigned to favor this humble Visitandine—the cult of the Sacred Heart would have eventually claimed its rightful place among the various devotions of the Church. Such a legitimate conclusion is warranted by its rapid development and the popularity it enjoyed especially in the time of Father Eudes. Thus, the revelations did no more than hasten an event which, in the ordinary course of things—judging from the facts as they were gradually unfolding themselves to the perspective—was practically inevitable.

The principle on which the devotion to the Sacred Heart rests is far from being something new. St. Thomas in his attempt to elucidate it makes use of the following well-known comparison. We may consider two things in a person to whom honor is given, viz., the person himself and the cause of his being honored. Properly speaking, honor is given to a subsistent thing in its entirety; for we do not speak of honoring a man's hand or foot, it is not by reason of these members being honored of themselves, but by reason of the whole being honored in them. In this way a man may be

[1] Gilbert Dolan, *Dublin Review*, O. S. B., April, 1897, p. 373.

honored even in something external; for instance, in his vesture, his image or his messenger.[1] Guided by this ratiocination the theologians conclude that the primary material object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is Jesus Christ Himself in His Entirety. Hence, a cult like that of the Sacred Heart, properly speaking, is a latreutic co-adoration, for we adore the Heart with the rest of the parts of Christ's sacred Humanity, including His divine prerogatives. The Heart is thus worshipped *secundum se,* and *in se,* but not *proper se.*

[1] *Sum. Theol.,* p. III, qu. XXV, art. I.

CHAPTER V

THE MATERIAL OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

We read in the life of Blessed Margaret Mary [1] that two years after she made her profession, while absorbed one day in prayer and contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament, Our Divine Lord appeared to her, and said: "Behold the Heart which has loved men so much." Here we have a picture in which the material as well as the formal object of this devotion is clearly set in relief. Christ exhibited Himself whole and entire, hence, He is to be worshipped as such. This apparition corresponds to the primary material object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. He designated the secondary material object when He pointed to His Heart saying: "Behold the Heart." He indicated the formal object with the words that follow: "Which has loved men so much," words expressive of the love of Christ.

Pesch [2] distinguished between, what he calls, the *obiectum integrum* and the *objectum proximum*. By the former he designates the primary material object of this devotion, viz., Christ in His inseparable unity. Under the latter he combines Christ's Sacred Heart and His love. Bishop Languet states that this devotion consists in loving Jesus Christ whom we have continually with us in the Blessed Sacrament, and toward whom we are to exhibit the same love by

[1] LANGUET, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[2] *Prael. Dog.*, vol. IV, p. 106.

various practices.[1] St. Alphonsus is of the same opinion.[2] Bernard Jungman agrees in substance with the two foregoing authors by saying that the primary object of this devotion is the immense love of Our Lord which He showed principally in His passion and in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament.[3]

Without multiplying examples that are calculated to prove the same proposition we shall draw the inference that all the acts of worship redound primarily to the honor and glory of Christ as God, or as God-Man, and all else is only a secondary consideration, irrespective of the object to which the worship is directed or in which it terminates.

It may appear very singular, says Father Noldin, that not even at this present age are the opinions of the theologians and ascetics fully agreed as to the object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.[4] While we do not wish to gainsay his statement, we can likewise say, without fear of contradiction, that no ascetic or theologian of any importance would call in question the doctrine which holds that the proximate secondary object of this devotion is the Heart of Christ. This Heart is to be viewed in a two-fold sense, viz., as a corporal organ and as a symbol. In the former sense it is the fleshy Heart, not lifeless but living, not separated, but hypostatically united to the Person of the Logos. In the latter sense it is taken figuratively as representing the love of Our Lord. We are to apply here the principle of St. Gregory, i. e., through the medium of a visible object we are to form a concept of something imperceptible.[5] The

[1] "Toute cette dévotion ne consiste, pour ainsi dire, *qu'à aimer ardemment Jesus-Christ,* que nous avons sans cesse avec nous dans la sainte Eucharistie, et à lui témoigner cet amour par diverses pratiques." (LANGUET, *op. cit.,* p. 114.)

[2] *Novena del cuore di Gesù,* initio.

[3] *De Verbo Incarnato,* p. 231.

[4] "Es dürfte befremdend erscheinen, dass man sich über den Gegenstand der Herz-Jesu-Andacht von Seite der Theologen und Asceten zur Stunde noch nicht volkommen geeinigt hat." (*Die Andacht zum heiligsten Herzen Jesu,* Innsbruck, ed. 1910, p. 70.)

[5] *Brev. Rom.,* Pars. Autum., *Hom. pro Com. nec Virg. nec Mart.*

Preface of the Nativity enunciates the same truth.

From the foregoing remarks it is manifest that the body of the devotion, or the object which is within the ken of the senses, is the Heart of Christ as the material sensible element. The soul of the devotion, viz., its formal object or motive, is the element symbolized by the Heart, i. e., the supersensual element or the charity of Christ. St. Augustine tells us that love is the foundation of all the affections conceived by man's desiderative faculties. Thus, we may uphold the statement made by Cardinal Pie: "The devotion to the Sacred Heart is the very quintessence of Christianity, the epitome and substantial summary of the whole of religion." [1]

In order to give expression to the whole doctrine in incisive perspicuous terms we re-state that in the devotion of which we are treating we worship the Heart of Christ as symbolizing His love. We honor His love under the symbol of His Heart. These two objects having an intimate relationship with one another it follows that they are not to be separated in the mind of the worshipper. The Heart is to be considered as the supplement of the love, and vice versa. The corporal and sensible Heart and its supersensual love are to be viewed *ad modum unius*. They claim our worship as one object, both being inseparably united to the Person and soul of Christ.

The Heart of Christ is worthy of our veneration because it is the Heart of one "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal to God." [2] We worship it on account of its hypostatic union with that divine Person and nature, according to which Christ is one with the Father,[3] and not on account of that nature according to which the Father is greater than the Son.[4] The excellency, majesty, dignity and perfection of the Person of the

[1] *Circular letter to the clergy* in 1857.
[2] *Phil.* II. 6.
[3] *John* X. 30.
[4] *John* XIV. 28.

Logos are the sources from which this Heart receives its borrowed excellence, and they may be attributed to it *secundum quid.* Through these it becomes a transcendentalized Heart. Its function is that of a living organ of a God-man. Christ's human life in ordinary course of events depends upon it. The mere piercing of this Heart would have resulted in the death of the God-Man just as inevitably as it was caused by the manifold excruciating agonies.

Man is so constituted that his relation to God and to things supernatural is a direct postulate of symbolism. This statement is borne out by the historical data of both pagan and Jewish nations. Symbolism is such an important factor, especially in things appertaining to the spiritual domain, that even Christ Himself would not dispense with it. His followers adopted their Master's example by making free use of symbolism through spiritual and utilitarian motives, and occasionally—as in the time of persecution—through sheer necessity. We all know the unbounded enthusiasm which is displayed at the sight of things symbolical of patriotism. This same hidden power is brought into evidence when our eyes strike a symbol which we are accustomed to associate with a religious idea. Iconography and iconology testify to this truth, for they have always been considered as potent factors in secular and religious education. It is for this reason that St. Gregory lays such an emphasis on the principle which claims that man through the intellection of things visible arrives at the understanding of things imperceptible. The Church canonizes and applies this fundamental principle when in the Preface of the Nativity she chants: "Because by the mystery of the Word made flesh, from Thy brightness a new light hath arisen to shine on the eyes of our soul in order that God becoming visible to us we may be borne upward to the love of things invisible."

The soul of man is spiritual. Her destiny and life are supernatural. By divine ordinance she is doomed to pass a temporary existence in the body. To promote her end she is forced to make

use of a transitory dwelling. The senses of the body are the primary and the best adapted means for this purpose. A symbol not only appeals to them but helps one to form a clearer idea and a more lasting impression of things beyond his ken. It whets the appetite of the senses, so to speak. Christ being aware of this exigency of human nature exhibits His heart to be used as a symbol of His love. Thus, He succeeds in employing the faculties of the body as well as those of the soul which two, when combined, are in a position to produce a human act pleasing and meritorious in His sight.

There are numerous sources which could be adduced in testimony that the fleshy sensible Heart of Jesus is the material object of this devotion. The few presented below will suffice to establish this proposition.

I. Father Croiset, the first exponent of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, is well qualified to instruct us on this point. "In the exercise of even the most spiritual devotions," he says, "we stand in need of certain material and perceptible objects. It is for this reason that the Heart of Christ was selected, for, as a visible object, it is the worthiest of our respect, and the most appropriate to attain the end which this cult has in view. For what could be a more natural and better adapted symbol of love than the heart." [1]

II. Bishop Languet, who familiarized himself with most of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, and thus was in a position to pronounce an authoritative judgment in this matter, confirms the same opinion. "In order to make known the object of this devotion," he says, "we make it perceptible by the representation of the Heart of Jesus Christ. The Heart being the most natural symbol

[1] "Mais parce que nous avons toujours besoin dans l'exercice des dévotions même les plus spirituelles, de certains objets materiels et sensibles, qui nous frappent davantage, nous en renouvellent le souvenir, et nous en facilitent la pratique, *on a choisi le sacré Coeur de Jesus, comme l'objet sensible le plus digne de nos respects, et le plus propre en même temps à la fin qu'on se propose dans cette dévotion. Et quel symbole plus propre et plus naturel de l'amour que le coeur.*" (Croiset, *op. cit.*, tom. I, ch. I, p. 5 and 7.)

of love, consequently, it ought to serve as the proper symbolic representation of a devotion which consists entirely of love." [1]

III. Father Galliffet, the indefatigable champion of this devotion, sets forth the same truth in words that permit only one interpretation. "It is not less evident," he states, "that we have to do here with the Heart itself of Jesus Christ in its simple and natural sense, and not metaphorically. Jesus Christ speaks of His Heart actually; this is made clear by the action of uncovering his Heart and of showing it." [2]

The subsequent investigation will disclose to what extent the decisions of the Church reflect the teaching of these three earliest exponents and pioneers in the field of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The reader will be acquainted with those decrees only which concern themselves directly about the material object of this devotion.

IV. On Jan. 26, 1765, the Polish Bishops requested Clement XIII to permit them to say a special Mass and Office in honor of the Sacred Heart.[3] In this petition they make the following statement: "It is manifest that Christ referred to His Heart not in its metaphorical sense, but in the natural meaning of the word *heart*, as it is the most noble part of His body. Therefore, He proposes to our worship His sacrosanct Heart, not only inasmuch as it is the symbol of interior affections, but as it is *in se*." [4]

[1] "C'est pour faire connaître l'objet de cette dévotion, qu'on le rend sensible par la représentation du coeur de Jesus-Christ, *parce que le coeur est le symbole le plus naturel de l'amour, et par consequent il doit être celui d'une dévotion qui se réduit toute entiere à l'amour.*" (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, liv. IV, p. 115.)

[2] GALLIFFET, *op. cit.*, ch. IV, p. 44.

[3] *Anal. Jur. Pont.*, 4 ser. an. 1860, col. 1239.

[4] "Porro de corde non translatitie sumpto, sed in propria ac nativa significatione accepto, videlicet ut pars est corporis Christi nobilissima, eum locutum evidens est ex ipsa actione qua cor suum detegens, vides, inquit, Cor meum? De hoc ergo Corde loquitur, quod detegit ac monstrat. *En igitur quae sit res quam Jesus colendam proponit, nimirum Cor suum sacrosanctum, non tantum ut est symbolum omnium interiorum affectionum, sed ut est in se.*" (POLONI EPISCOPI, an. 1765, NILLES, *op. cit.*, sec. II, cap. II, p. 98.)

It is evident from the above petition that the Polish Bishops had a proper concept of the material object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and gave a precise expression to it. The Holy Father acceded to their wishes, and in His rescript dated on Feb. 6, 1765, he stated that with such a permission the Holy See intended to spread the already existing devotion, and symbolically to commemorate the remembrance of that divine love by which the only Begotten Son of God took upon Himself human nature, and being obedient unto death, offered Himself to men as an example, for He was meek and humble of heart.[1]

The above decree which extended the specified privilege to the Bishops of Poland and the Archconfraternity of Rome, finds its official interpretation in the Mass and Office both approved by the same Pontiff on May 11, 1765.

On Aug. 23, 1856, Pius IX raised the Feast of the Sacred Heart to the dignity of a *duplex maior*, and extended it to the universal Church. He approved the Mass *Miserebitur*, the oration of which clearly sets forth the material object of the devotion. "Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who, glorifying in the most Sacred Heart of thy beloved Son, celebrate the singular benefits of his love towards us, may rejoice equally in their action and their fruit."[2]

In the sixth lesson for the Feast of the Sacred Heart it is stated that Clement XIII permitted the celebration of this Feast to cer-

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[1] Congregatio Sacrorum Rituum, huius missae et officii celebratione non aliud agi, quam ampliari cultum iam institutum et symbolice renovari memoriam illius divini amoris, quo Unigenitus Dei Filius humanam suscepit naturam, et factus obediens usque ad mortem, praebere se dixit exemplum hominibus, quod esset mitis et humilis corde." (*Bull. Rom. Con.* vol. VI, p. 933.)

[2] "Concede, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus; *ut qui in sanctissimo dilecti Filii tui Corde gloriantes praecipua in nos caritatis eius beneficia recolimus*, eorum pariter et actu delectemur et fructu. (*Oratio Missae Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu.*)

tain Churches "in order that the faithful may so much more fervently and devoutly worship the charity of the suffering Christ under the symbol of the Sacred Heart." [1]

V. In the Pseudo-Synod of Pistoja the Jansenists proclaimed this devotion to be erroneous in the form in which it was approved by the Holy See. Pope Pius VI, in his bull. *Auctorem Fidei,* issued on Aug. 28, 1794, brands their doctrine (prop. 62) as "false, temerarious, pernicious, offensive to pious ears and injurious to the Apostolic See, as if (prop. 63) the faithful adored the Heart of Jesus considering it separated or abstracted from the Divinity, whereas in reality they adore it as the Heart of Jesus, the Heart, namely, of the Person of the Word with Whom it is united inseparably in the same way in which the lifeless body of Christ during the three days of His death, without being separated or dissociated from the Divinity, was adored in the sepulchre. Hence their doctrine is captious, injurious to the faithful worshippers of the Heart of Christ." [2]

VI. To confirm this contention still further, it will be well to quote a few words of the Decree of Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, issued on Aug. 19, 1864. "While she was praying with fervor before the august Sacrament of the Eucharist," the

[1] "Quam charitatem Christi patientis . . . *ut fideles sub sanctissimi Cordis symbolo devotius ac ferventius recolant,* Clemens XIII ipsius sacratissimi Cordis festum nonnullis Ecclesiis celebrare concessit." (Brev. Rom., *Officium SSmi Cordis,* Pars Aestiva, Lectio VI.)

[2] "Doctrina, quae devotionem erga sacratissimum Cor Jesu rejicit inter devotiones, quas notat velut novas, erroneas, aut saltem periculosas; intellecta de hac devotione, qualis est ab apostolica Sede probata, falsa, temeraria perniciosa, piarum aurium offensiva, in apostolicam Sedem injuriosa. Item in eo quod cultores cordis Jesu hoc etiam nomine arguit, quod non advertant sanctissimam carnem Christi, aut eius partem aliquam, aut etiam humanitatem totam cum separatione, aut praecisione a divinitate adorari non posse cultu latriae; quasi fideles Cor Jesus adorarent, cum separatione vel praecisione a divinitate, *dum illud adorant, ut est cor Jesu, cor nempe Personae Verbi, cui inseparabiliter unitum est,* ad eum modum, quod exsangue corpus Christi in triduo mortis sine separatione, aut praecisione a divinitate adorabile fuit in sepulchro, captiosa, in fideles cordis Christi cultores injuriosa." (Bulla *Auctorem Fidei,* Pius VI, prop. 62 and 63. See *Bull. Rom. Con.,* vol. X, p. 2719.)

decree states, "Our Lord intimated to her that it would be pleasing to Him, if the worship of His most Sacred Heart, burning with love for mankind, were established, and He wished the charge of this to be consigned to her."[1] "In order the more to enkindle this fire of charity," the decree continues, "He would have the adoration and worship of His most Sacred Heart established and propagated in the Church, for who, indeed, is there so hard-hearted and unfeeling as not to be moved to reciprocate the love of that amiable Heart which was pierced and wounded with the lance."[2]

From these words it may be rightly concluded that the devotion was to be such as was inculcated by Blessed Margaret Mary. Her writings give ample evidence that the physical corporal Heart of Christ was repeatedly presented to her eyes in a visible form. It is such apparitions that induced her to endeavor to pay a tribute of love to the Sacred Heart, and make an effort to stimulate others to follow in her footsteps.

VII. The Beata qualified the Heart of Christ as the seat of divine charity, and always considered it as a factor indissolubly united with the devotion. The Iconography of the Sacred Heart as approved by the Congregation of the Holy Rites is in consonance with her view. It decreed on Jan. 16, 1885, that the officially recognized picture or statue of this devotion is one which represents the whole figure of Christ with His Heart visibly exhibited. The Heart has a just claim to such a prominence, because it is the material or sensible object through which the supersensual, i.e., the love, is to be reached.[3]

[1] "Iamvero ante augustissimum Eucharistiae Sacramentum eidem fervidius orante significatum est a Christo Domino, *gratissimum sibi fore si cultus institueretur sacratissimi sui cordis humanum erga genus charitatis igne flagrantis,* ac velle se huius rei curam ipsi demandatam."

[2] "*Hunc vero charitatis ignem ut magis incenderet, sanctissimi sui cordis venerationem cultumque institui in Ecclesia voluit, ac promoveri.* Ecquis enim tam durus ac ferreus sit quin moveatur ad radamandum Cor illud suavissimum idcirco transfixum ac vulneratum lancea." (*Anal. Jur. Pont.,* 7 ser. an. 1864, col. 934 and 935.)

[3] *Decreta Authentica,* C. S. R. Dec. 3625.

The arguments thus far adduced, if viewed with due deliberation, ought to suffice to carry conviction to every theologian. In order not to leave room for even the slightest doubt about the material object of the devotion in question, it will be well to quote a few select passages taken from more modern authors. This investigation will serve two purposes, viz., it will apprise us of the concept they entertained of the material object of this devotion, and will also show us in what sense they propagated it in their respective languages and countries.

A. In the middle of the 18th century St. Alphonsus Liguori wrote a work entitled *"Novena del Cuor di Gesù."* The following words borrowed from it will be to the point. "Its material or sensible object is the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, not indeed taken by itself, but as united to the Sacred Humanity, and consequently to the divine Person of the Word." [1]

B. Muzzarelli, whose work [2] was edited in 1826, is very explicit when treating of the material object. "The Sacred Heart of Jesus," he says, "is to be taken in its proper and natural signification, therefore, it means His fleshy Heart, but always viewed as united to His Humanity and the Person of the Word." [3]

C. Nilles in his work of 1869 presents a more authoritative exposition of the devotion than any writer previous to that date. In his characteristic clearness he thus expresses himself concerning the object of the devotion. "The Holy See, while proposing to our worship the Heart of Jesus, inasmuch as it is the symbol of His

[1] *"L'oggetto poi materiale o sia sensibile, è il SS. Cuore di Gesù,* non gia preso per se nudamente, ma come unito alla santa umanità e per consequenza alla divina persona del Verbo." (Leroy, *De SS. Corde Jesu eiusque cultu,* cap. III, qu. XIV, n. 162, p. 168.)

[2] *Sur la Dévotion et le Culte du Sacré Coeur de Jésus-Christ,* Avignon, 1826.

[3] "Le Coeur de Jésus-Christ se prend dans le sense propre et natural, et alors *il signifie son Coeur de chair cependant toujours considerée comme unie à son Humanité et à la Personne du Verbe."* (Muzzarelli, Translation from the Italian, Avignon, 1826, p. 14.)

infinite love, meant to exhibit the double object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, viz., the real and physical Heart of the Redeemer, and the infinite charity of Christ." [1]

D. Father Noldin through his work of 1883 [2] contributed not a little towards the spread of the devotion among the German-speaking people. In his estimation "the corporal Heart is of great importance, and of no slight significance for the practice of the devotion. Apart from the fact that Our Lord finds a special delight in seeing His love worshipped under the symbol of the physicial Heart, it is the most appropriate and efficacious means of elevating mankind, who are slaves to their senses, to the knowledge and adoration of the charity of Christ." [3]

E. It is in this sense that the devotion to the Sacred Heart has been propagated among the different nations of the world. In a very popular book, to which, to a large extent, it owes its dissemination in Hungary, we read that "it was the will of Christ to make His real fleshy Heart the object of this devotion. It is from that Heart the devotion receives its name."[4]

The above quotations, taken from the decisions of the Sacred Congregation as well as from divers authors of various nationalities living at different times, clearly indicate that, at present, no

[1] "Sedes Apostolica igitur dum Cor Jesu colendum proponit, quatenus symbolum est infiniti eius amoris, id agit, ut duplex nobis cultus exhibeat Sacratissimi Cordis obiectum; *ipsum symbolum, h. e., verum ac physicum Cor Salvatoris, et rem signatam, h. e., infinitam Christi charitatem.*" (Nilles, *op cit.*, sec. II, Praemonitum II, p. 77.)

[2] *Die-Andacht zum heiligsten Herzen Jesu,* Innsbruck, 1883.

[3] "Daraus ergibt sich, dass für die Übung der Andacht das leibliche Herz von überaus grosser Wichtigeit und Bedeutung ist. *Abgesehen davon, dass Jesus Christus ein besonderes Wohlgefallen findet daran, dass seine Liebe im Symbole des leiblichen Herzens verehrt werde, ist es das geeignetste und wirksamste Mittel, um den an die Sinne gefesselten Menschen zur Erkenntnis und Verehrung der Liebe Christi zu erheben.*" (Noldin, *op. cit.*, ch. III, p. 91 and 92.)

[4] "*Krisztus akarata szerint tehát az ö valóságos testi szive közvetlen tárgya ezen tiszteletnek és ájtatosságnak és azért ezen tisztelet, és ájtatosság* is ezen szivtöl kapja nevét." (Augustine Huebner, *Jézus Szentséges Szive,* Kalocsa, 1891, p. 54.)

theologian is authorized to hold that the material object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is something not yet definitely determined. If, a few decades ago, certain devotional manuals failed to state this object with sufficient clearness and precision, it was due to the fact that they concerned themselves with the spiritual aspect of the devotion rather than with its material side. At present all the nations have a uniform belief on this subject. It is generally admitted that the cause ot the popularity of this devotion lies in its material object, for it is this factor that appeals to the erudite as well as to the illiterate. In view of this fact, the Church places on the lips of Her Clergy the inspiring invitatory for the Feast of the Sacred Heart: "Come, let us adore the Heart of Jesus, the Victim of love."[1]

Christ as to His Person lived from all eternity, not so, however, as to His human nature. But He decreed that the body with which He reconciled us to His heavenly Father shall remain inseparably united to His divinity. We distinguish three states of this corporal existence of the God-man, viz., His physical body which He assumed and in which He suffered during His terrestrial sojourn, His natural body in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and His glorified body in Heaven. All three states contain the same identical Body He assumed in the mystery of the Incarnation, therefore, His Heart plays an important role in each. Consequently, we worshop His Sacred Heart correspondingly to the three states.

During His earthly sojourn the Heart of Christ was the paragon of all virtues which ought to excite our admiration and emulation. There is a deep meaning hidden in the words to which His sacred lips gave utterance: "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble

[1] "Cor Jesus, caritatis victimam, venite adoremus." (*Brev. Rom.,* Pars Aestiva. *Off. prop. pro aliquibus locis.*)

of Heart."[1] His Heart in this first state was sorrowful unto death.[2] During the agony on the Mount of Olives His Heart's blood oozed through the pores of His Body.[3] It was shed profusely while the bloody scenes of Redemption were enacted. Finally, His Heart was pierced with a lance and thus emptied of all its blood.[4] His Heart was the co-principle of all His acts and affections, sharing and inspiring the love He had for humanity which ultimately made Him a Divine Holocaust for the sins of mankind.[5]

The Heart in the second state, as it resides in the Body concealed under the sacramental species, is to be a very special object of this devotion. The ineffable love He exemplifies in this state induced Him to perform an act which almost reaches the acme of His omnipotence. It is the suffering Heart in the Sacrament of love to which, above all, He asks us to make reparation and amends for the sacrileges and insults offered by ungrateful, indifferent and unbelieving souls.[6]

After Solomon finished the Temple the Lord said to him: "I have chosen, and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there forever, and my eyes and my *heart* may remain there perpetually."[7] This reference to His Heart in the Old Testament must be taken figuratively, only as an adumbration to be actualized in the New Testament, when the Heart of a God-man truly and

[1] *Matt.* XI. 29.
[2] *Matt.* XXVI. 38.
[3] *Luke* XXII. 44.
[4] John XIX. 34.
[5] *Matt.* XXVII. 50.
[6] "Pour reconnaissance, je ne reçois de la plupart que des ingratitudes, par les mépris, les irrévérences, les sacrileges et la froideur qu'ils ont pour moi dans ce Sacrement d'amour. C'est pour cela que je te demande que le premier vendredi après l'Octave du saint Sacrement, soit dédié à faire une fête particuliere pour honorer mon Coeur, en lui faisant réparation par une amande honorable." (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, liv. IV, p. 129.)
[7] II *Par.* VII 16.

really was to sanctify the Christian churches with its real presence.

Again, if we reverence the statues and pictures which are only representations, how much more fitting it is to worship the reality of which they are only faint shadows? In this second state we adore that love of Christ which finds its delight in being with the children of men,[1] and which induced Him to remain with us to the consummation of the world.[2]

In the third state we worship the Heart of Christ as it dwells in His glorified body, where it is living perpetually "to make intercession for us."[3] In Heaven it is receiving well-merited special divine honors from the Angels of the celestial realm, and the Saints whose present felicity was made possible of attainment through the shedding of its redemptive blood. The Sacred Heart dwelling in heaven amply supplies for the lack of love which the rational and irrational creation shows the Creator. There, surrounded with unalloyed love and homage, it is partly compensated for its past sorrows and humiliations by the enjoyment of infinite beatitude and the plenitude of ineffable happiness.

[1] *Prov.* VIII. 31.
[2] *Matt.* XXVIII. 20.
[3] *Heb.* VII. 25.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FORMAL OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

Being cognizant of the innumerable sources which contributed to the supereminent elevation of the Heart of Christ, as well as to its many consequent excellences, one must not infer from this that all these are of equal significance in this devotion as it is approved by the Church, and diffused and practiced all over the world. The main characteristic of the Heart which chiefly ought to claim our adoration, and towards which our attention should be directed principally, is its infinite charity for men. By this attitude of mind we do not mean to ignore the other surpassing qualities with which it is embellished, and which individually are entitled to the same degree of worship. We simply mean to intimate our preference in favor of its charity on account of the close connection which the latter enjoys with the physical heart, which is generally accepted as a symbol of love.

In a following chapter, when treating on the inter-relation of heart and man's appetitive faculties, it will be pointed out to what extent can be justified the acceptance of the above symbolism. For the time being the attention of the reader will be called to the created love alone. The consideration of the somewhat speculative question of the whole formal object, which ought to include the increated love also, must be left to another chapter.

St. Augustine is of the opinion that love precedes all our affec-

tions, and is their cause.[1] St. Thomas subscribes to this principle unconditionally, and proves its tenableness.[2] Bossuet enumerates the different passions of our appetitive faculties, and concludes with the words: "Eliminate love, and all the passions disappear, posit love, and they are all generated.[3] If this be true, then all the affections emanate from love and corrivate in love. Thus the sentiment of love enjoys a prominence greater than which cannot be imagined among the affections of the human nature. Farges in his philosophico-psychological inquiry arrives at the same conclusion.[4]

Christ's human nature, even if viewed abstracted from His divinity, far surpassed ours in excellence and integrity. It possessed that original righteousness which we lost on account of the first sin of disobedience.[5] Therefore, its sentiment of love was of a far superior quality than ours, for it was intensified by the sinlessness which characterized the first Adam. This same human nature was elevated to a still higher plane through that union with the divine nature and Person of the Word whereby it became impeccable. Christ's appetitive faculties and acts externalized the most noble sentiments capable of being reduced to visibility by a God. The love that found expression through them was theandric, hence, the most altruistic imaginable. It was intrinsically opposed to all misanthropy. Christ, therefore, may justly be designated as the most benevolent philanthropist conceivable. We must eliminate in Him all desires incompatible with His divine Sonship. His appetitive faculties crave nothing but what was intrinsically good. All His pro-passions were so many divine virtues inspired by a god-like love.

[1] "Amor praecedit omnes alias animi affectiones, et est causa eorum. (*De Civ. Dei,* lib. XIV, c. 7 and 8.)

[2] 2a 2ae, qu. CLXII, a. III, ad 4um.

[3] "Enfin ôtez l'amour, il n'ya plus de passions, et posez l'amour vous les faites toutes naître." (*Connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même,* ch. I, p. 6.)

[4] Albert Farges, S. S., *Le cerveau, l'âme et les facultés,* part II, sec. VI.

[5] Gen. III, 6.

Hence, He is the very personification of love.

The moral life of man is not more conceivable without love than his physical life without a heart. Love is the mainspring of all the individual actions of man. Such is the concept we are to form of the love of Christ as symbolized by His Heart. To prove this proposition, the same course will be pursued as outlined when treating on the material object of this devotion.

I. The autobiography of Blessed Margaret Mary records a revelation in which Christ appeared and said to her: "Behold the Heart which has loved men so much, that it spared nothing even to exhausting and consuming itself, in order to testify its love for them." [1] We could point out other apparitions in which Christ desires our love in return for love.

II. Father de la Colombière was among the first who consecrated themselves to the service of the Sacred Heart. His motives for such an act were the tender sentiments Jesus Christ entertains towards us in the Sacrament of love, where His Sacred Heart is always burning for the love of men being ready to shower upon them manifold graces and benedictions.[2]

III. Father Croiset expresses the character of the formal object of his devotion in words that will admit only one meaning. "It consists," he says, "in nothing else but in a practice of love. Its object is love, its principal motive is love, love must needs be its end." [3] Further in the same chapter he states that: "This divine

[1] "Voilà ce Coeur, qui a tant aimé les hommes, qu'il n'a rien épargné jusqu'à s'épuiser et se consommer, pour leur témoigner son amour." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. II, p. 102.)

[2] "Il n'eut pas plûtot consideré quel étoient les sentimens pleins de tendresse que Jésus-Christ a pour nous dans le saint Sacrement, où son Sacré Coeur est toujours, brûlant d'amour pour les hommes, toujours ouvert pour répandre sur eux toutes sortes de grâces et de benedictions, qu'il ne put se représenter sans gemir les outrages horribles que Jésus-Christ y soufre." (Croiset, *op. cit.,* tom. I, p. 15.)

[3] "Ce n'est ici proprement qu'un exercise d'amour, l'amour en est l'objet, l'amour en est le motif principal, et c'est l'amour qui en doit être la fin." (Croiset, *op. cit.,* tom. I, p. 5.)

Heart considered as a part of the adorable body of Christ, is only the sensible object of the devotion, its principle motive is the immense love Christ bears for men." [1]

IV. Bishop Languet expresses himself to the same effect. "In order to reveal the object of this devotion, and to make it sensible," he remarks, "we represent it by the Heart of Jesus Christ. The Heart being the most natural symbol of love, consequently, it ought to be the symbol of a devotion which confines itself solely to love." [2] Explaining the nature of the love which forms the object of worship in this devotion, he continues: "Its object is the immense love Jesus has for men, of which he gave them a precious token in the mystery of the Eucharist, and which actuated Him when He embraced death for their salvation." [3]

V. Numerous passages can be gleaned from the work of Father Galliffet in confirmation of the foregoing statements. On account of his zeal and the knowledge which he had of the various phases of this devotion, his contemporaries entrusted him with the office of pleading their cause as the *Postulator Causae*, when they petitioned the Holy See for a special Mass and Office in 1729. Therefore, his words ought to carry considerable weight. "In the devotion to the Sacred Heart," he says, "the essential motive for honoring it is the love with which it is inflamed, and the sufferings it endured through the ingratitude of men, which has relation to the divine heart, and to no other part of his body." [4]

These five spiritual writers, adduced as authorities concerning the formal object of the devotion in question, were the first expo-

[1] CROISET, *op. cit.*, tom. I, p. 7.

[2] "C'est pour faire connoître l'objet de cette dévotion, qu'on le rend sensible par la représentation du Coeur de Jésus-Christ, *parce que le Coeur est le symbole le plus naturel de l'amour, et par consequent il doit être celui d'une dévotion qui se réduit toute entiere à l'amour.*" (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, Liv. IV, p. 115.)

[3] LANGUET, *op. cit.*, liv. IV, 114.

[4] GALLIFFET, *op. cit.*, ch. V, p. 61.

nents of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Church, in spite of all the entreaties on the part of the faithful, for a long time, would not take official cognizance of such a worship. Finally she yielded to the insistent demand, and granted her approval.

Subsequent investigation will disclose that the devotion has been approved as advocated by its early exponents.

VI. Pope Clement XIII on February 6, 1765, in a special decree thus interpreted the motive for honoring the Sacred Heart. "It is to commemorate symbolically the memory of that divine love by which the only Begotten Son of God took upon Himself human nature, and being obedient unto death, offered Himself to men as an example, being meek and humble of Heart." [1]

VII. On Sept. 28, 1819, Pius VII permitted the Feast of the Sacred Heart to be celebrated as a double of the first class in the Holy Land in order that the places of Palestine sanctified by the presence of Our Saviour may be the theatre showing forth His vehement love for men, and that the devotion to the Sacred Heart diffused in those places far and wide may grow from day to day.[2]

VIII. On Aug. 23, 1856, Pius IX issued a decree in which he established the Feast of the Sacred Heart for the universal Church. In this he states that "Clement XIII permitted some churches to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart with an Office and Mass, in order to commemorate the immense divine love of His Heart." [3]

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[1] "Respondit Sacra Congregatio Sacrorum Rituum," huius Missae et Officii celebratione non aliud agi, quam ampliari cultum iam institum et *symbolice renovari memoriam illius amoris divini; quo Ungenitus Dei Filius humanam suscepit naturam, . . .* (*Bull. Rom. Cont.*, vol. VI, p. 933.)

[2] "*Palestinae loca* praesentia Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi sanctificata *intentissimi eiusdem erga homines amoris argumenta praebeant, quodque in singulis illis locis longe lateque diffusa Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu devotio in dies augeatur.*" (*Anal. Jur. Pont.*, an. 1855, p. 601 and 122; ib. Nilles, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 and 54.)

[3] "Ex quo Clemens Papa XIII in honorem sanctissimi Cordis Jesu festum cum officio et Missa nonnullis Ecclesiis celebrare permisit, *ad immensam huius Cordis caritatem recolendam.*" (*Anal. Jur. Pont.*, an. 1857, p. 2589; ib. Nilles, pp. 3 and 60.)

IX. A clear presentation of this formal object is found in the Decree of Beatification given on Aug. 29, 1864. It states that Jesus desired nothing so much as to stimulate by every means in the souls of men that charity with which His Heart was consumed. . . . And in order the more to enkindle the fire of charity, He would have the adoration and worship of His most Sacred Heart established and propagated in the Church.[1]

X. Pope Pius VI in his letter to Scipio de Ricci on June 24, 1781, insists that "the substance of this devotion, whih is absolutely free from every superstitious materialism, seeks, by means of the symbolical representation of the Heart, to lead us on to the contemplation and veneration of the immense charity and excessive love of Our divine Redeemer." [2]

Without multiplying similar examples, to prove the conclusion already sufficiently established, it can be said without fear of contradiction, that all the modern theologians who engaged in writing on this subject expressed themselves to the same effect.

A. Nilles maintains that the Apostolic See proposed to our veneration the Heart of Christ, inasmuch as it is the symbol of love in order to exhibit the double object of the cult, viz., the symbol itself, i.e., the real physical Heart of the Saviour, and the thing symbolized, i.e., the infinite charity of Christ. Of these two, however, the more important is the thing symbolized, or the love of Christ in this case.[3]

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[1] "Jesus nihil potius habuit quam ut flammam charitatis, qua cor eius urereretur in hominum animis modis omnibus excitaret. *Hunc ergo charitatis ignem ut magis incenderet, sanctissimum sui cordis venerationem cultumque institui in Ecclesia voluit, ac promoveri.*" (*Anal. Jur. Pont.*, ser. VII, an. 1864, col. 934.)

[2] "*Substantia illius devotionis* ab omni certe superstitiosa materialitate immunis *revera spectet, ut symbolice Cordis imagine immensam caritatem effusumque amorem divini Redemptoris nostri meditemur atque veneremur.*" (Nilles, *op. cit.*, sec. II, cap. I, p. 88.)

[3] "Sedes Apostolica igitur dum Cor Jesu colendum proponit, quatenus symbolum est infiniti eius amoris, id agit, ut duplex nobis exhibeat cultus sacratissimi Cordis obiectum, ipsum symbolum, h. e., verum ac physicum Cor Salvatoris, et rem signatam, h. e., infinitam Christi caritatem. Ex his vera praecipua est res signata seu caritas Christi." (Nilles, *op. cit.*, sec. II, cap. I, p. 77.)

B. The same truth is expressed by Father Vermeersch with striking and appealing words. "I adore," he says, "the material Heart of Jesus, but, while doing so, I regard it as a living symbol which to me personifies all His love. I adore the love of Jesus, and by this act I contemplate it in its natural and sensible manifestation, where Jesus shows it to me, i.e., in the fleshy Heart." [1]

C. Father Noldin's view coincides with the foregoing. "Hence love is justly called the motive, and as such the formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, exactly in the same way as the sufferings of Christ are said to be the motive and formal object in the devotion to the Five Wounds." [2]

D. It is in this sense that the devotion is propagated among the different nations by writers who in their vernacular treated the question. Thus, for instance, in a Hungarian devotional manual it is stated that "Our divine Lord made use of His real and fleshy Heart in order that thereby He might reveal its love, and, enkindling in us flames of love, might induce us to reciprocate it." [3]

It would be an easy task to multiply similar examples almost indefinitely. One may, however, content himself with the above. The formal object of this devotion is so clearly defined by the decisions of the Sacred Congregation and the decrees issued by the different Pontiffs that it ceased to be something indefinite, or optional, nor is one permitted to substitute for it something con-

[1] "J'adore le Coeur matériel de Jésus, mais, en l'adorant, je le regarde comme le symbole vivant qui personifie pour moi tout son amour; j'adore l'amour de Jésus, mais, en l'adorant, je le contemple dans la manifestation naturelle et sensible où Jésus me le montre, dans le Coeur de chair." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, ch. I, art. IV, p. 23.)

[2] "*Darum wird die Liebe mit vollem Recht das Motiv* (das formelle Motiv), *und als solches wohl auch der formelle Object der Herz-Jesu Andacht genannt;* gerade so, wie man die Schmerzen Jesu Christi das Motiv und formelle Objet der Andacht zu der heiligen fünf Wunden nennt." (NOLDIN, *op. cit.*, cap. III, p. 89.)

[3] "Isteni Megváltónk épen valóságos és testi szivét használta fel eszközül, hogy szivbeli szeretetét kinjilvánitsa es bennünk annak viszonzására szeretetlángokat gyujtson." (AUGUSTINE HUEBNER, *Jézus Szentséges Szive*, Kalocsa, 1891, p. 57.)

jectural. The arguments adduced in confirmation of this contention are so convincing that they were instrumental in bringing about an absolute uniformity among the present day theologians and spiritual writers.

While the Heart and the love are two distinct elements of the devotion in the mind of the worshipper, they are to be considered as two partial objects forming a whole. The nobility of the heart depends on the dignity, majesty and holiness of him whose organ it is. But the Heart of Christ because of the hypostatic union shines with the brightness and brilliancy of the Godhead, for His divine presence not only permeates it with its sanctity but His divine Person entrusted it with a sacred function indispensable for the preservation of the life of His human nature. Therefore, if there were no other reasons, this alone would suffice to induce one to pay it homage and adoration. Such, however, is not the principal actuating motive. While the Divinity subsisting in it is always our primary incentive, it is the supersensual Heart, viz., Christ's love for mankind that inspires our attitude towards it. We worship this love, for, when viewed as created and increated, it forms the very essence of the God-man. We adore it, for it was the actuating motive to which all the sufferings of Christ are traceable in their final analysis. Hence, it is the primal, immediate and principal cause of our Redemption. We venerate the increated love, for it brought into being a human nature, and created a Heart which, embellished with human and divine sanctity, shed its last drop of blood for sinful humanity.

This Heart once created and hypostatically united the divine Person was destined to be immortal. Therefore, since there are three principal states in which the Heart may be considered, we venerate its love for reasons that are proper to, and correspond with the respective states.

The principal motive which ought to actuate us in worshipping the Heart as it dwelt in the bosom of Christ during His terrestrial sojourn is the love with which He accomplished the Redemption of mankind; the love which induced Him to found a Church with which the redeemed could affiliate themselves; the love which stimulated Him to establish the Sacraments and constitute them as the channels of grace to serve as vitalizing and strength-giving means for all who strive to attain their glorious destiny.

The Eucharistic Heart symbolizes that love which induced Christ to be with the children of men [1] to the consummation of the world,[2] and also the love which influenced Him to conceal His divine majesty under the veil of sacramental species, thus to offer us an example of heroic humility and self-abasement.[3] Finally, it symbolizes that love also which constrained Him to renew, in an unbloody manner, the bloody sacrifice of the cross by being daily immolated on our altars in order to implore mercy from His Heavenly Father for transgressing humanity, and, thus, to stay at least temporarily the hand of chastisement.

The Heart of Christ in its glorified state symbolizes the love which He entertains for the redeemed, and the love under whose influence He becomes our Mediator and Intercessor. Since the Heart in this supernaturalized state reaps the benefit of all the work undertaken both for God and man, it may be considered as the personification of this double love, and this love may be worshipped as symbolized by the transcendentalized Heart.

[1] *Prov.* VIII. 31.
[2] *Matt.* XXVIII. 20.
[3] *Matt.* XI. 29.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEART IN SYMBOLISM.

There could be nothing more timely at this point of our investigation than the question: Why do we worship the love of Christ through the symbol of His Heart? It is obvious that there must be some particular reason for it. To answer this question a clear concept must first be formed of the symbol, the thing symbolized and the reason of symbolization. In theological terminology they are called the *signum, res signata* and *ratio significatus.* In this devotion the *signum* or *symbolum* is the fleshy Heart of Christ. The *res signata* is His infinite love. The *ratio significatus* is the coherence which exists between the two.

The word *symbolum* is derived from the Greek, and it means to put or throw together. It implies an inference arrived at from the connection of two concepts. All theologians insist more or less on the relationship existing between the symbol and the thing symbolized. The purpose of the following pages is to present a tentative explanation of the relation existing between the material and the formal object of this devotion to justify it even in this respect. In order to reach the desired conclusion in this regard, it will be advisable to present a brief treatment of the leading roles which the heart is called upon to play, A. In Sacred Scripture; B. In common parlance; C. In physiology and psychology.

A. 1. The Sacred Scripture designates the heart 1. As the ideal seat of the affections, e.g., (a) Joy and sorrow: "Behold my servant

shall praise for joyfulness of *heart,* and you shall cry for sorrow of *heart.*" [1] (b) Envy: "Let not thy *heart* envy sinners." [2] (c) Charity: "Now the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure *heart.*"

2. It assigns to the heart intellectual operations; (a) Imagination: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the *heart* of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." [4] (b) Attention: "Set your *hearts* on all the words which I testify to you this day." [5] (c) Memory: "Lay up these my words in your *hearts* and minds." [6]

3. It is the source of desire and volition, e.g. "Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their *hearts* unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves." [7] And, again, "From *it* (*the heart*) come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies." [8]

BLUNT in his *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* sums up all that can be said on this point. "The heart," he says, "in the Holy Scripture is the scene and subject of every class of operation, emotional, intellectual, active, incident to the spiritual nature of man . . . it is the whole man extensively and intensively. It is a source both of good and evil." [9]

B. It is exactly in this sense that all the nations of the world accepted the word *heart.* While its meaning might have been more extensive in the past than it is at the present time, nevertheless, it is not altogether divested of its former synecdochical, metonymical

[1] *Isaias* LXV. 14.
[2] *Prov.* XXIII. 17.
[3] I. *Tim.* I. 5.
[4] I. *Cor.* II. 9.
[5] *Deut.* XXXII. 46.
[6] *Deut.* XI. 18.
[7] *Rom.* I. 24.
[8] *Matt.* XV. 19.
[9] BLUNT, *op. cit.,* art. *Heart.*

and metaphorical representations. The expressions *"Give me your heart," "kind-hearted, lion-hearted, pigeon-hearted," "with all my heart," "to bring home to one's heart"* . . . and many others, have obviously a much deeper signification in the common parlance and in the general acceptation of the term, than they seem to imply at first sight. Comparative Philology reveals a greater wealth of meaning connoted by the word *heart* than by any other word.

It is not to the point to enter into a lengthy investigation in order to reveal the source from which the popular mind drew the above concept of the heart. Suffice it to say that it was promoted, to no small degree, by the anatomical doctrines of Plato. He divided the human soul into three parts, and assigned a particular function to each. He localized the rational soul in the head, the irrascible soul in the heart (thorax), and the appetitive soul in the abdomen.[1] The comparison of the soul to a pair of winged steeds and charioteer will perhaps best explain the Platonic division of the soul into three elements, viz., Reason, Passion (or Spirit) and the Appetites. Here Reason is the Charioteer, while Passion and the Appetites are the horses.[2]

In Plato's estimation the mortal soul whose chief characteristic is the virtue of "fortitude and spirit and which loves contention" is located in the thorax. Thorax in this connection stands for that part of the body which begins with the collar-bone and reaches as far down as the pelvis.[3] In this part "they (the gods) placed the heart in a kind of sentry-house." The Appetites are like wild beasts chained to a manger, which Reason, dwelling in the head, controls by the aid of passion, which in turn, to a large extent,

[1] DAVIS, *Works of Plato,* London, 1890, *Timaeus,* vol. II, sec. XLIV, pp. 380-382.

[2] H. MUELLER, *Platon's sämmtliche Werke,* Leipzig, 1854. *Phaedrus,* vol. IV, p. 117.

[3] Such seems to be the Platonic concept.

is held in check by the heart. Thus every passion, no matter in what part of the soul it originates, passes through the heart. Here may be found the explanation of the concept the popular mind entertains of the function of the above organ. Plato, however, is not the first who attributed such an importance to the heart as regards human passions. A similar belief has been expressed in the Jewish literature and the Sacred Scripture long before his time.

C. The Platonic concept of the heart implies a participation of this organ in man's moral life. Such a function presupposes an ascendancy exercised by it over our appetitive faculties. In conformity with such a view the physiologists of the past accepted the current belief of the common people, and thus established the mistaken conclusion that the heart is the seat of love. The Scholastics, accepting this view, pictured the heart as the medium or channel, in which resided in a dormant state, so to say, man's emotional, intellectual, as well as other operations[1] which in order to be animated to action needed only a stimulus, the latter being furnished by our needs, environments and various other circumstances.

Such, however, is not the present day conception of the function which the heart is called upon to perform in the human organism. Lewes, editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, develops what might be called the modern theory of the physiological aspect of the heart.[2] The experimentalists, to all appearances, proved conclusively that the functions attributed formerly to the heart are exercised by the brain. Even if the tenableness of this theory be not open to question, we need not be disconcerted. The interrelation existing between the heart and the brain will still afford a sufficient ground for maintaining the symbolism as involved in the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

[1] Suarez, *De anima*, lib. V., cap. IV; St. Thom. IIa IIae, qu. XXIX, a.I, *Respondeo;* again, IaIIae, qu. LXXIV, a. IX, ad2.

[2] Lewes, *Heart and Brain.* (In the *Fortnightly Review*, vol. I, p. 67.)

No physiologist would deny the importance of the pulmonary circulation. The sensibility of the human body depends to a great extent on the blood. Even the extra-vascular tissues of the body are dependent on it. The right side of the heart receives the blood as it is brought from the general system of the veins, and sends it to the lungs. The left side receives it from the lungs, and sends it into the general system. Thus the blood exercises an enormous influence upon the vegetative phenomena, upon the life of the nerve-cells, and to a great extent their individual dynamic activity: consequently, the life of the whole system depends upon it. The continuity of the irrigation of the blood is, then, the *sine qua non* of the regular working of the cerebral cells. According to the estimate of Haller, one-fifth part of the whole blood-supply goes to the brain.[1]

But in the human organism the cardiac system and the cerebral system are like one: they interlace and interpenetrate each other, so that the slightest modification of the one is followed by a corresponding change in the other. The brain is nourished by the heart, and the latter's blood, momently pumped into it, makes the activity of the former possible. The transmission of the blood to the lungs and its distribution throughout the organism are rendered possible only through the influence of the brain. The brain is the most delicately susceptible of all the organs to every variation in the quality of blood sent to it. If the heart pumps feebly, the brain acts feebly. If the blood is vitiated, the brain is lethargic. Thus the two great centres interact. They are both lords of life, and both mutually indispensable.

On the other hand, every impression reacts on the circulation, a slight impression producing a slight acceleration, a powerful impression producing an arrest more or less prolonged. We are all familiar with the fact that powerful mental shocks momently arrest

[1] Calderwood, *The relations of mind and brain.* ch. II.

the heart, and sometimes this arrest is final, as in the case of a very sensitive and sickly organism. The sensitiveness depends on the connection that exists between the heart and the brain. "Thus the heart is indissolubly connected with every manifestation of sensibility, and it is so delicately susceptible to all emotional agitation, that we may not improperly regard it as the ancients regarded it, in the light of the chief centre of feeling; for the ancients had no conception of the heart as an organ specially endowed with sensibility, they only thought of it as the chief agent of the sensitive soul." [1] "Hence the heart, because its action is momently involved in every motion, and because every emotion reacts upon it, may, as truly as the brain, be called the great emotional centre." [2] Neither brain nor heart can claim that title exclusively. They may claim it together.[3]

The above statement finds its confirmation in the words of the learned physiologist Claude Bernard. "The sentiments we experience," he says, "are always accompanied by some reflex action of the heart . . . and the impression of such sentiments creates a continuous exchange of influences between the heart and the brain." [4] From the exchange of these influences Muzzarelli draws the inference that there is a mutual interrelation between the love of the soul and the physical heart.[5]

[1] Lewes, *l. c.*, p. 71.

[2] The modern physiologists would object to this word. It implies too much when referred to the heart.

[3] Lewes, *loc. cit.*, p. 71.

[4] "Les sentiments que nous éprouvons sont toujours accompagnés par des actions reflexes du coeur . . . et l'impression de ces sentiments résulte d'un échange continuel d'influences entre le coeur et le cerveau." Leroy, *op. cit.*, c. I, qu. III, p. 28.

[5] "Quoi qu'il en soit, les sentiments, les impressions, les palpitations qu'éprouve le coeur de chair, quoique médiatement par l'amour que réside dans l'âme, et que tout homme éprouve plus ou moins en lui-même, sont autant de témoins irréfragables de la correspondence mutuelle entre l'amour et de lâme et le coeur de chair, et de la diffusion et communications des effets d'un amour ardent ou timide à cette partie du corps, de quelque manière que cela arrive." (Muzzarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 232; ib. Leroy, *op. cit.*, c. I, qu. III, p. 17.)

To summarize all that can be said on this subject, it may be maintained that all physiologists admit an influence exercised on the heart by the affections and passions of man. It is likewise true, therefore, that the heart being thus acted upon, by reacting, participates actively in the affections of the soul. In other words, it is an established physiological principle that extrinsic impressions influence the heart intrinsically, and cause a reaction in it.

Without dwelling on this point any longer, it may be concluded that, physiologically speaking, the connection between the heart and the emotions is sufficiently close to authorize the statement that the heart is an indirect organ of the appetitive faculties. Thus it participates in all the emotions, whereof none is stronger than love. The heart being thus conceived, it may be said that the Heart of Jesus is an organ united to the appetitive faculty of Christ's human nature. In this sense it is the partial seat, organ and instrumental cause of all the acts and affections, and of all the virtues of our divine Lord. Hence, it is a partial seat, organ and instrument of the love of Christ.[1]

Let us now enumerate some of the principal acts Christ performed in course of His life on earth, and bring them into correlation with His Sacred Heart. His divine Person assumed a human nature. For numerous reasons one of the most noble parts of the latter was His Heart. His ever-existing divine life consecrated this Heart which to Him was the source of His human life. The infinitely holy, incomparably sacred thoughts, acts and virtues which He performed through the instrumentality of His body, sanctified His Sacred Heart, and elevated it to a dignity which perfectly to portray and comprehend in its reality would necessitate an intellect rivalling the divine. Our Redemption was accomplished by the suffering and death of Christ. Both these, while affecting all

[1] Leroy, *op. cit.*, c. I, qu. IV, p. 53.

the organic parts of His body individually, have in a special manner affected His Heart, which, according to a long-adopted and scientifically confirmed principle, is among the first organs to live, and among the last to die.[1]

Again, we were redeemed by the shedding of Christ's blood, the consecrated receptacle whereof was His Sacred Heart. As the Heart is the cause of the blood's circulatory motion, it is also the determining cause of its effusion, in the different stages of Our Saviour's passion, whether we contemplate His bloody sweat, caused by vehement impulses affecting His Heart or the wounds afflicted by the executioners. By the divine power of the Logos He could have ordained that the blood, shed so lavishly for our salvation, be prevented from oozing out, but, He preferred to empty His Heart for the love of mankind. In addition to the above reasons, this Heart merits a very special veneration on account of the wound inflicted on it by the lance.[2]

Leroy expresses the same opinion when applying to the Sacred Heart the result of his physiologico-psychological investigation concerning the functions of the Heart. "The Sacred Heart in its supersensual meaning (love)," he says, "is the supreme primary divine cause, as well as the principal secondary human cause of the Redemption of mankind. In its obvious sense it is the living fleshy organ of Christ, and as such it is the most congruous symbol illustrative of the above two operations of Redemption. It is, moreover, according to a probable opinion, the proper organ and the principal seat of the principal second cause of the mysteries of the Redemption, viz., of the appetitive faculty of Christ, which is His human

[1] "Le coeur qui est de tous les organs celui . . . qui est entré le premier en exercise, est encore le dernier mourant; déjà depuis longtemps les austres muscles ont cessé leur action, et le coeur vit encore, c'est comme on l'a dit depuis longtemps le *primum vivens* et l'*ultimum moriens*." (LEMINIER, *Dict. des sciences méd.*; ib. LEROY, *op. cit.*, c. I, qu. I, p. 8.)

[2] *John* XIX. 33.

love; therefore, it is also an instrumental cause in the consummation of the same mysteries. Combining the material and the formal object, we may say that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be viewed as the meritorious cause of the whole Redemption, and especially of some of its effects.[1]

By endeavoring to point out the intimate relationship between the heart and the brain, and the former's participation in man's emotional sentiments, it was not our intention to create the false impression that such a close connection is a *conditio sine qua non* of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Even if the theory of modern physiologists would undergo a change, and all interrelation between the heart and the brain should be eliminated, the results would in no way affect this devotion. If the coherence existing between the heart and the brain, as authorized by modern physiological theory, corresponds to reality, then the above conclusions are entirely justifiable. Such a function of the heart would aid us in the practice of this devotion, for it would render its formal object more tangible. If, on the other hand, such a correlation could not be established, a discrepancy would indeed arise between the interpretation of a phase of the modern science and our symbolism, but the devotion need not necessarily suffer from it. In religious matters the Church does not depend upon shifting sands which form the foundation of so many interpretations given to so-called human sciences. This

[1] "Ex dictis consequitur SS. Cor Jesu, dictum metaphorice, esse tum causam primam supremam divinam, tum causam secundam humanam principalem Redemptionis generis humani; Cor vero Jesu, sensu proprio acceptum, organum corporeum vivens animatum Christi, esse imprimis symbolum valde congruum causae illius principalis sive primae sive secundae operis Redemptionis; esse praeterea, secundum sententiam probabilem, si non certam, a nobis superius expositam et vindicatam, organum proprium et praecipuam sedem causae secundae principalis mysteriorum Redemptionis, scilicet appetitivae facultatis Christi, amoris humani Eius; esse proinde et ipsum causam instrumentalem in completione eorundem mysteriorum; Cor Jesu utroque modo acceptum esse causam meritoriam totius Redemptionis, et specialiter quorundam Redemptionis effectum." (Leroy, *op. cit.*, c. I, qu. IV, p. 63 and 64.)

devotion deals with something spiritual, something appertaining to faith, and its symbolism has a sufficient warrant apart from the function of the heart as it is interpreted by the present day physiologists.

It must be borne in mind that the heart in this devotion is not viewed as the organ of love, but only as the symbol thereof. Just as the lily represents purity, the scale symbolizes justice, and the sickle conveys the idea of harvest, so the heart suggests the thought of love. This symbolical signification of the heart is so deep-seated that it is likely to last till the end of the world. After all, symbolism in general may be defined as the employment of a concrete tangible reality, used as a vehicle to convey to the mind the idea of an abstract or spiritual reality. That the heart in this case serves such a purpose most admirably, no one can deny. This in itself, irrespective of any scientific basis, would suffice to justify the choice which Christ made when He selected the heart for the symbol of His love. Therefore, we are not inclined to subscribe to the opinion advocated by Father Galliffet, viz., "if it were a fact that the heart could have no part in the emotion of loving, the foundation of the proposed devotion having failed, the devotion would fall to the ground of itself." [1]

A comparison might, perhaps, bring out in clearer relief our contention on this point. Threpsology tells us that bread is a nutriment of organic bodies. It can in no way strengthen the soul or satisfy her spiritual needs. Yet, it was selected as the most appropriate matter for transubstantiation; not on account of its intrinsic fitness or worth, but because it is the most common of all foods, and because no symbol is calculated to represent more strikingly the process and necessity of nourishing a famished soul. The heart, on the other hand, is an indispensable organ of every indi-

[1] Galliffet, *op. cit.*, ch. IV, p. 49.

vidual. Ancient literature as well as the popular mind create a concept of its function which fails to correspond to reality when viewed intrinsically. Yet, it being one of the most noble organs, there is a sufficient warrant for the acceptance of such a traditional view. The modern physiological aspect of the function of this human organ is far from lending itself to poetry and symbolism to the extent to which it adapts itself when viewed from the Platonic standpoint.

An additional reason can be drawn from Psychology. It teaches that supernatural truths can be grasped best through perceptible objects. The clearness and fulness of our comprehension of such truths depend on the appeal the symbol makes to the senses. The deeper the impression made by the symbol, the quicker the response of the soul and the more inspiring and enduring the realization of the thing symbolized. This psychological principle, it may be presumed, actuated Christ in His choice of the symbol for the devotion to His infinite love. We fail to see what other object is calculated to render the above devotion more popular than the one which by a widespread international acceptation is the most natural symbol of love.

Again, the ways of God are inscrutable. Man's finite understanding is not able to penetrate, and weigh adequately all the reasons that motivate the divine Mind. It is easy to conceive how, in His range of infinite wisdom, Christ might have had special ends in view inducing Him to offer His Sacred Heart to symbolize His love. No man can fathom with adequateness all the merits which this divine Heart acquired when viewed through the mystery of the Redemption. Nor is any one qualified to point out definitely all the functions it was called upon to exercise in such an unparalleled body as the one which the divine Logos possessed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTS OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

In order to supplement our knowledge concerning the object of this devotion it would be well, at this point of our investigation, to answer the much-disputed question of the moralists as to which of the two objects merits, and actually enjoys, the primary place. To eliminate all misunderstanding it must be borne in mind, from the very outset, that though the formal and the material objects are two distinct features of the devotion, they are not to be taken in the sense that one is at liberty to show worship to either of them separately. Such a worship is, indeed, theologically warrantable, but, it would fail to be in harmony with this particular devotion as approved by the Church, and propagated among the faithful. The spirit of the devotion requires that the two objects be always considered *ad modum unius*, for they are two indivisible and inseparable constituents of one and the same devotion. For the sake of theological speculation, however, they may be viewed abstractedly, not from the divinity of the Logos, but only from one another.

An object may be primary either by reason of excellence or in the order of time. Applying this rule to the point under investigation the proposed inquiry would resolve itself ultimately into the question whether the fleshy Heart of Christ, as united to the divine Person, is of greater excellence than His love, or *vice versa?* The answer to this question will determine which is the primary, and which the secondary object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart by reason of excellence.

But, in our popular devotions the mind of the worshipper is not always directed to the highest motive, or object which a particular cult presents for veneration. While our intention is, or always ought to be, to worship the more noble object, still, we may begin by giving honor to the less noble first, because it appeals to our senses immediately, and then by means of this we may rise to the higher. Thus, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the first object towards which our worship may be directed could be either the symbol, viz., the Heart, which—by a transition of thought—our mind would connect later with the thing symbolized, i.e., love, or *vice versa*. In the first instance the heart would be the primary and love the secondary object, in the order of time. This order would be inverted in case our worship begins with the thing symbolized, which is later united to the symbol.

Theologians debating the question of primariness and secondariness of the two objects of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, advance many reasons to prove their individual convictions. After the perusal of this chapter one should have no difficulty in locating the cause of the lack of uniformity in this matter.

To begin our investigation it must be borne in mind that in all the devotions practiced in honor of Christ we distinguish a visible and an invisible object. To simplify the proposed task it will be well to advance the following proposition: In all the devotions with which we worship Christ *that* object is to be considered the primary one to which the cult owes the reason of its existence, and in which it terminates. The expression *in which it terminates* does not mean to convey the idea of the *terminus ultimus*, or the final end. In this sense all the devotions practiced in honor of Christ terminate in the divine Person of Christ. It means to intimate the second last *terminus* which, when brought into correlation with the visible object, not only bears a close relationship with the *terminus ultimus*, viz., the Logos, but, also points out the motive

which actuates our adoration of Him under a certain aspect. We shall attempt to illustrate this principle by exemplification.

In the devotion to the *Five Wounds,* the *terminus ultimus* is the divine Person of Christ. The second last *terminus* is His sufferings. Thus, the second last *terminus* brings Christ into correlation with His Wounds, and reveals the reason why He is deserving of our adoration under the aspect of the Wounds. Hence, in the devotion to the *Five Wounds* the primary object is the suffering Christ, the secondary object is His Five Wounds.

In the devotion to the *Holy Name of Jesus* the *terminus ultimus* is the divine Person of the Word. The second last *terminus,* which brings Christ into correlation with His Name, and establishes the reason why He is worthy of adoration under such an aspect, is the power and mysteries contained in that Name. Therefore, the primary object of this devotion is the power and mysteries contained in that Name, and the secondary object is the Name itself.

One more example will suffice to elucidate the principle fully. In the cult to the *Holy Cross the terminus ultimus* is the same as in all the other devotions of Christ. The second last *terminus,* which brings Christ into correlation with the Cross, and manifests the reason why He is deserving of a worship under such an aspect, is His death. Consequently, in the devotion to the *Holy Cross,* the death of Christ is the primary, and the Cross the secondary object. It is not a controverted question that the primary and the secondary objects of the above three devotions are as stated. Hence, the principle stated above may be applied safely to all the other devotions of Christ. In other words, the primary object is not the one by which the cult is named, but that which results from the correlation of the visible object or name of the devotion with Christ. This object might be called the relatively last, or the second last. It is only relatively last, for it does not terminate in the Logos directly, but only mediately.

If the same principle is applied to the devotion to the Sacred Heart we find that the *terminus ultimus* is the Person of the Logos. The second last *terminus* which brings Christ into correlation with His Heart, and manifests the reason why He is deserving of a special worship under the aspect of His Heart, is His love. Therefore, the primary object of this devotion by reason of excellence is the love of Christ, and the Heart would thus become the secondary object. This is a self-evident truth. All admit that the primariness or secondariness of a thing depends on its origin, rank, excellence, importance, . . . etc. Such being the case no one would deny that the love of Christ, whether human or divine, possesses a higher degree of eminence than His Heart, which is considered only as its symbol. Therefore, the Heart is subordinate to the Love by reason of excellence.

The following quotations taken from authoritative sources will corroborate the contention, that the love must be considered the principal or primary object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart by reason of excellence.

I. Blessed Margaret Mary in one of her letters to Mother de Saumaise gives utterance to, what might be considered, a prophecy. "God will reign," she says, "in spite of His enemies, and will become the Master of our hearts, for such is the principal motive of this devotion, viz., to convert souls to His love." [1]

II. Father Croiset interprets the substance of the devotion by saying: "It consists in nothing else but a practice of love, its object is love, its principal motive is love, love must needs be its end." [2] Again, "it is easy to see that the principal object and motive of this devotion is the immense love which Jesus Christ has for mankind, the majority of whom show towards Him only contempt or indifference, to say the least." [3]

[1] "Dieu regnera malgré ses ennemis, et il se rendra le Maître et le possesseur de nos coeurs, *car c'est là la principale fin de cette dévotion, savoir de convertir les âmes à son amour.*" (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, p. 364.)

[2] CROISET, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 5.

[3] "*Il est aisé de voir que l'objet et le motive principal de cette dévotion est l'amour immense que Jesus-Christ a pour les hommes*, qui n'ont la plupart que du mépris ou du moins de l'indifference pour lui." (CROISET, *op. cit.*, vol. I, ch. I, p. 3.)

III. Father Galliffet expressed himself to the same effect. "As to the spiritual and principal object," he says, "it is pointed out very clearly in the following words: *Behold the Heart which has loved men so much.* This immense love with which the Sacred Heart is inflamed forms the spiritual and principal object of this devotion." [1]

IV. Frigidianus Castagnorius, acting as the *Postulator Causae* in the time of Pope Innocent XII, makes it clear that "the principal object of this devotion is the immense love of the Son of God." [2]

Many modern authors could be quoted in confirmation of the same statement. However, the point being sufficiently established, we shall refrain from multiplying proofs. The failure to differentiate between the object which is primary by reason of its intrinsic essence and the one which is primary only in the order of time, was the principal cause of the misunderstanding which arose among the theologians on this point. Thus the whole dispute would hardly amount to more than a mere logomachy, for the disagreement is rather apparent and verbal than real.

If one examines the frame of mind of a worshipper who, *hic et nunc,* engages in paying tribute to Christ by means of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, he finds that, as a general rule, the love of Christ is not his foremost or immediate object. It is the tangible symbol, viz., the Heart, which claims his attention first, for there is no other vehicle calculated to facilitate to the same extent his visualization of the imperceptible object, i.e., love. Therefore, it may be safely said, that for most minds the Heart of Christ in this devotion is the mirror of love. A glance into that mirror will

[1] Quant à l'objet spirituel et principal, il est marqué très nettement dans les paroles de Jésus-Christ, qui suivent; *'Voilà ce coeur qui a tant aimé les hommes . . .'* C'est cet amour immense dont ce sacré Coeur est embrasé, qui est l'objet spirituel de cette dévotion." (GALLIFFET, *op. cit.,* ch. IV, Obser. II.)

[2] "Praecipuum enim huius devotionis obiectum est amor immensus Filii Dei." (*Anal. Jur. Pont.,* ser. IV, liv. 30.)

suffice to disclose instantly the love it reflects. This psychological principle will explain how, under ordinary circumstances, the Heart may be the primary object in the mind of the worshipper *ratione temporis,* though, *ratione finis* or *excellentiae,* it is subordinate to the love.

Again, it is generally admitted that the end *intended* principally by the devotion to the Sacred Heart is a special worship of the love of Christ. This love is to be contemplated through the Heart, which is its symbol. But in *the order of execution, that* object is the primary which is instituted as the medium whereby another object is to be reached. Thus, this latter object, though primary in the order of intention, becomes secondary in the order of execution. It has been proved above that the love of Christ is the primary object of this devotion. But a worship of this love is rendered less efficacious if it be dissociated, or considered abstracted from the Heart. Therefore, *ratione temporis,* the latter is the primary object.[1]

Again, the Heart is the *obiectum manifestationis,* for it is through such a symbol that the *obiectum colendum,* viz., the theandric love of Christ, manifests itself. The Heart receives the suffrages of the faithful immediately and directly. The explanation of this fact lies in human nature. The Heart falls under the direct perception of the senses. To rise to the apperception of the formal object or motive of the devotion, viz., love, the psychological phenomenon of rousing the senses, and of connecting the two objects must first

[1] "Atqui illud quod in ordine intentionis est medium ordinatum ad alterum, hoc est in ordine executionis primarium; in hoc enim ordine illud est primarium quod efficacius operatur ad finem; illud vero quod habet rationem finis, in hoc ordine est secundarium, licet principaliter intendendum, quia scilicet, minus efficaciter obtinebitur si per se et sine illo adhibito medio fiat, quam si fiat per aliud ordinatum ad ipsum, cultus amoris Jesu minus efficaciter praestabitur si immediate honores cultus ipsi deferantur praecisione facta a Corde, quam si honoribus afficiatur Cor ut in illo et per illud colatur amor." (Leroy, *op. cit.,* cap. III, qu. XVI, n. 190, p. 197.)

take place. Such a process postulates a transition of thought from the perceptible to the imperceptible object. For this reason the Heart is very appropriately qualified as the *"medium valde proportionatum infirmitati et imbecillitati hominum."*[1]

We are now in a position to appreciate how easily a misunderstanding could arise among the moralists debating on the primariness and secondariness of the two objects of which the devotion to the Sacred Heart is composed. The cause of the disagreement, in most instances, can be traced to their failure to discriminate between the object which is primary in the order of intention, hence, secondary in the order of execution, and primary in the order of execution, hence, secondary in the order of intention. This principle posited, the following conclusion may be drawn: If stress is laid on the intrinsic excellence, then, without doubt, the love is the primary and the Heart the secondary object. But, if, on the other hand, one wishes to emphasize the object *ratione temporis,* then, the Heart is the primary and the love the secondary object.

Some theologians are of the opinion that if one examines the frame of mind of a particular worshipper in the very act of paying homage to the Sacred Heart, in all probability he will discover that his principal motive is a composite one containing a partial mixture of the two objects. We subscribe to this opinion, for it is more in keeping with the spirit of the devotion as well as with the mind of the Church. The proper devotion to the Sacred Heart presupposes a blending of the two objects. A separate worship of either the material or the formal object is undoubtedly permissible provided they are not considered detached from the divine Person, but in neither instance would it be a devotion to the Sacred Heart as interpreted by the theologians, and encouraged by the Church.

[1] Leroy, *op. cit.,* cap. III, qu. XVI, n. 190, p. 196.

It will not be out of place at this point to summarize the conclusions that have been reached thus far, concerning the material and the formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. It has been ascertained that both these objects are outlined with sufficient distinctness in the decisions handed down by the Sacred Congregation. Spiritual writers, both past and present, are unanimous that the material object is the Heart of Christ. This Heart of Christ is the symbol of the formal object, viz., love. The Heart of Christ may be conceived in three different states, as indicated above. In each of these states it pertains to the devotion, and forms its material object viewed as the symbol of that love which best corresponds to the particular state. From all this it is manifest that the Heart is only an adjuvant to a better and clearer realization of the principal object, viz., love.

The formal object of the devotion is the Heart in its metaphorical, or, rather, symbolical representation, i.e., love. The Heart thus becomes the *obiectum manifestativum* of the principal or primary object. The formal object may be considered also the motive of the devotion, for it is Christ's love of us that actuates us in this devotion, and it is this identical love which receives our homages. The material object enjoys three different states. It is possible to point out a reason for the love as it is exemplified in each state respectively. Therefore, the formal object must include the love which individually corresponds to each of these states.

The two objects, though extrinsically distinct and separable, intrinsically are inseparable and combined *ad modum unius*. Their excellence depends on their hypostatic union with the divine Person of Christ. He endowed them with a dignity which is relatively infinite. If they are viewed in the light of the perfections to which He elevated them, but abstracted from the divine Person, the highest worship they could merit would be hyperdulia. By reason of their inseparableness from the Logos, they become

transcendentalized and as such are deserving of the cult of latria. The proper worship, therefore, requires that the formal and the material object be kept together and both viewed in the light of the hypostatic union with the divine Person of Christ.

Whatever excellence the Heart and the love possess, is directly traceable to the Saviour's Person. All claims of Christ's human nature on our worship are based on the personal character of the union whereby the Word became flesh. Because of the Divinity all the human acts of Christ, whether mental or physical, are qualified as theandric. Hence we speak of His theandric patience, theandric humility, theandric passion and death. And since the heart of Jesus is *par excellence* the symbol of His love, it is the symbol of a love at once human and divine.

The last few paragraphs summarize all the more relevant principles which, beacon-like, ought to guide us in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The importance of a worship which concerns itself with a homage to be paid to the physical Heart of Christ viewed united to the Divinity, and thus symbolizing His human and divine love, can hardly be exaggerated. It is also easy to see how this devotion facilitates our comprehension of the redemptive love, and thus helps us to visualize the divine economy of the Incarnation and Redemption.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPLANATION OF CREATED AND INCREATED LOVE.

Before entering upon the question involved in any adequate explanation of created and increated love, it is necessary to place certain definite limits to the meaning of these terms. The few theologians who *ex professo* speculatively considered this twofold love of Christ failed to arrive at the same conclusion. By the increated love they mean that love which Jesus Christ *as the second Person of the Trinity* possessed from all eternity. This love, like God Himself, always existed, it has no beginning nor end. The divine Person of Christ, foreknowing the future, and having a clear vision of it, foresaw the creation of man, and all the exigencies which such a divine act was to entail. His love co-operated with God the Father in giving us existence. Therefore, the above love may be considered in relation to man even before man existed, or the Incarnation took place. This is the idea of the increated love.

In contradistinction to the above, the created love of Christ is that love which He manifested through the instrumentality *of His human nature.* It represents the plenitude of that love which actuated Him in all the mental and physical acts He performed as God-man, and which eventually culminated in the Redemption of mankind. It must be borne in mind that the created love is not to be viewed abstracted from the divine Personality, but conjointly

with It, as the love corresponding to that human nature which the Logos used as a created medium. Otherwise it would not be deserving of the cult of latria. In other words, the increated love is the love which Christ, as the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, had for man from all eternity, and which He shall continue to have to eternity as *actus purus divinus*. The created love of Christ has its beginning with the Incarnation, but it will continue to the end of time, it is an *actus mixtus divino-humanus*.

It is evident that the distinction made between the created and the increated love can be predicated only of a being who had a twofold nature. On the strength of overwhelming evidence, taken from the Sacred Scripture and tradition, it may be rightly concluded that Christ, the Founder of Christianity, is such a being. We shall try to reproduce some of these proofs.

Christ says of Himself: "I and the Father are one," [1] and, again: "That which my Father hath given me (divine nature) is greater than all." [2] He says, furthermore, "I came from the Father, and am come into the world."[3] The first two texts imply a coequality with God the Father, in nature and virtue, for the same virtue, says St. Chrysostom, postulates the sameness of nature.[4] The third text, referring to His procession from the Father, interprets the second. Again, referring to His sheep, Christ says: "And I give them life everlasting." [5] It is evident, however, that no one can give such a gift unless he previously possessed it. If we supplement the above quotations we find that the Sacred Scripture speaks of Christ as

[1] *John* X. 30.

[2] *John* X. 29.

[3] *John* XVI. 28.

[4] Si autem eadem est virtus, manifestum quod eadem et natura." (Chrysostomus, *Hom.* 61, n. 2; ib. Hurter, *Theol. Dog. Com.*, Oeniponte, 1903, vol. II, p. 165.)

[5] *John* X. 28.

the Son of God;[1] adored by the angels of God;[2] by whom the world was made;[3] who being rich became poor that through His poverty we might be rich;[4] who is the brightness of Father's glory and the figure of His substance;[5] all these things imply equality with the Father, therefore, He must be co-eternal also.

St. Paul in his well-known text strikes the chord of the fundamental teaching of Christianity, when he exhorts the Philippians to practise the virtue of humility and thus imitate the example of Christ: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in the habit found as man."[6] The first of the two verses establishes the consubstantiality of Christ with God, and the second asserts His human nature. The words *taking the form of a servant* imply a pre-existence, the nature of which is explained by the words that precede, viz., *being in the form of God.*

Thus the eighth verse implies on the part of Christ the assumption of something He did not possess before. The Kenosis does not constitute a change as to His participation in the nature of God. The exinanition does not mean a defection from, or a diminution in the prerogatives of the Divinity. Nor does the self-emptying convey the idea of an effacement of the essence of His pre-existent nature. St. Hilary in his work on the Blessed Trinity explains the mystery of the Incarnation by pointing out that Christ retaining the *Formam*

[1] *Matt.* III. 17.
[2] *Heb.* I. 6.
[3] *Heb.* I. 2.
[4] II. *Cor.* VIII. 9.
[5] *Heb.* I. 3.
[6] *Phil.* II. 7-8.

Dei, took upon Himself the *Formam servi.*[1] The annihilation simply means that He remained what He was, but concealed His infinite power and majesty under the garb of a humble appearance.[2]

St. Ambrose expresses the above truth in words that are most unequivocal: "Far from discontinuing to remain what He was, but assuming something that He was not, because He took upon Himself the form of a servant." [3]

Perhaps the most perspicuous text we could glean from the Patristic literature to prove the pre-existence of the divine Person in Christ is that of Victorinus in his controversy against the Arians. "Those who say that Jesus proceeds only from man, know that they utter a blasphemy against Christ, who was in the form of God. When did He so exist? Before He came in the body. He said that He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. Therefore, He existed before He became man. And in what form? *Logos Dei, forma Dei.* He claimed an equality with God. This implies power, substance. He did not say similar, for it fails to convey the idea of substance." [4] Since He retained His Divinity, and became incarnate, therefore, according to His human nature

[1] "In forma enim Dei manens formam servi assumpsit non demutatus sed seipsum exinaniens et intra se latens, et intra suam ipse vacuefactus potestatem. (Hilarius, *De Trin.* Migne, P. L., vol. X, col. 432.)

[2] "Erat quod nos sumus neque amiserat esse quod manserat." (Hilary, *op. cit.,* Migne, P. L., vol. X, col. 409.)

[3] St. Ambrose, *de fide,* Migne, P. L., vol. XVI, col. 573.)

[4] "Qui hominem dicunt Jesum et solum ab homine factum, cognoscant impiam blasphemiam in Christo, qui in forma Dei existens! Quando existens? Antequam veniret in corpus! Dixit enim, quod exinanivit seipsum et accepit formam servi: erat igitur et antequam homo fieret; Et qualis erat? Logos Dei, forma Dei. Quid est istud aequalis existens Deo? Quod est eius ipsius et potentiae, substantiae; dixit enim aequalem esse. Non dixit similis Deo, quod non significat substantiam. (Victorinus, Migne, P. L., vol. VIII, col. 1055.)

He is less than Himself, according to His divine nature He is more than Himself.[1]

After having cited numerous authorities in defence of the Catholic traditional teaching as to the pre-existence of Christ, Dr. Schumacher concludes: "According to the Catholic concept of the mystery of the Kenosis, the true Divinity of the Logos was not visible in its glory, though it remained undiminished in the Incarnation. Therefore, in consequence of becoming man, Jesus was truly self-conscious of His Divinity as well as of His humanity, though He appeared only as a poor humble man." [2]

With the foregoing it is sufficiently established that the divine Person in Christ had a pre-existence. This Person by becoming incarnate did not lose any of His divine prerogatives. If He retained all the essential characteristics of the Deity, then His love which belongs to the very essence of God remained unimpaired. Hence it is proper to speak of the pre-existent love in Christ in contradistinction to the love which His human nature elicited after His Incarnation. It is this pre-incarnate love which the theologians designate by the adjective *increated*.

It is not necessary to enter into an extensive process of reasoning to prove that Christ possessed also a created love. His human nature once admitted as an incontrovertible fact, its inevitable postu-

[1] "Neque enim sic accepit formam servi, ut amitteret formam Dei: ergo . . . quod in forma Dei etiam ipse seipso maior est, in forma autem servi, etiam a seipso minor est." (RABANUS, MIGNE, P. L., vol. CXII, col. 487-488.)

[2] "Schälen wir aus diesen mannigfachen Formulationsumhüllungen den stabilen Kern heraus, dann lautet das Ergebnis: dass die wahre, durch die Inkarnation unversehrt gebliebene Gottheit des Logos infolge der Menschwerdung in dem sich als wahren Gott und wahren Menschen wissenden und doch nur als armer niedriger Mensch erscheinenden Jesus nicht in ihrer Herrlichkeit erschaubar war, bildet nach katholischer Auffassung das Geheimnis der Kenose." (SCHUMACHER, *Christus in Seiner Präexistenz und Kenose*, Rome, 1914, p. 189.)

late is a love which finds expression through the faculties with which such a nature is endowed. He testifies to such a love;[1] foretells that eventually it will actuate Him to give His life for His sheep;[2] it was so interpreted by His Apostles;[3] and its ardor induced Him to remain with us in the Sacrament of love.[4]

On account of this concept of the two different loves in Christ a controversy arose among the theologians as to the nature of the love which we worship under the symbol of the Heart. Is it the increated or the created love? Are the two to be conceived as one sole object? Is the Heart of Christ to be considered as a symbol of that love only which began to exist simultaneously with it, or is its symbolization to be extended also to the love whose existence was prior to that of the Heart? Which of these two loves is the primary and which the secondary, when viewed as an object of the devotion in question? These are some of the difficulties to be answered in the following pages.

It is generally admitted that the early exponents of the devotion to the Sacred Heart did not distinguish clearly between the created and the increated love. Some of their statements refer to an infinite love which does not necessarily imply the idea of the increated love, for the divine Logos, subsisting in the human nature, endows with infinite merit all the acts attributable to His moral life as man.

I. There is no statement in the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary which would help to solve the question. She does not discriminate between the two loves. Indeed, no man reading her autobiography could point out a place or a reference which could be interpreted as a definite indication of the increated love. To all

[1] *John* XIII. 34.
[2] *John* X. 11.
[3] *Gal.* II. 20.
[4] *John* XIII. 1.

appearances such a problem never occurred to her. Even Christ Himself, if viewed in the light of the words spoken during His repeated revelations as recorded by her, fails to intimate whether such two loves are to be considered as a motive of the devotion. If one were called upon to pass a judgment, having at his disposal the works of Blessed Margaret Mary as the only evidence, he would unhesitatingly pronounce in favor of the exclusion of the increated love. It would not be difficult to cull some passages, however, which might be construed as involving the idea of the increated love. It would be a mistake to make the assertion, that she excluded such a love from the devotion, on account of having failed to give a clear expression to it. She was not endowed with the keen intellect of a speculative theologian, whose tendency is to elucidate even the most minute details in connection with a certain doctrine. In her mind it was a devotion in which, through the symbol of the Heart, the love of Christ was to receive a special worship. This was all Christ demanded. It remained for the Church to determine specifically the full extent and nature of that love, on the fundamental principles of Christology. Perhaps the most comprehensive expression she gave to the idea of this love is found in one of her letters quoted by Bishop Languet. "This amiable Heart," she says, "has an infinite desire to be known and loved by its creatures, in whom it wishes to establish its empire as being the source of all good." [1] The notions that we are His Heart's creatures, and that it is the source of all good may be interpreted as referring to the increated love, but even then the evidence is far from conclusive, and passages of this nature are extremely few in her writings.

II. Be that as it may, the work of Father Croiset, who was the imme-

[1] "Cet aimable Coeur a un désir infini d'être connu et aimé de ses créatures, dans lesquelles il veut établir son empire, comme étant la source de tout bien." (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, liv. VII, p. 241.)

diate exponent of this devotion after the demise of Blessed Margaret Mary, fails to shed more light on the subject under discussion. The first chapter of his work contains the most conclusive words which might induce one to believe that he considered the increated love as a partial formal object of the devotion. "By the devotion of the Sacred Heart," he says, "we understand the ardent love which we conceive for Jesus Christ in remembrance of all the miracles He wrought for us to testify His tenderness, and, above all, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist which is the miracle of His love." [1] If we are to worship His love *in commemoration of all the miracles He performed for us,* then the increated love seems to be included, for the first miracle was His Incarnation and the created love that accompanied it and followed from it. All the consequent miracles are to be attributed to the above, for it was their incipient cause.

This is the only passage which would permit one to consider the love of Christ under such a comprehensive aspect, all the rest confine themselves *to the immense love which induced the Son of God to embrace death for us, and to give Himself to us in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, without being deterred from such a miracle at the sight of the ingratitude and outrages which in this state as an immolated victim He was to receive to the end of time.*[2]

III. Only a very indefinite idea of the increated love can be traced in the writings of Father Fromment, a contemporary of

[1] "Par la dévotion au Sacré Coeur on entend un ardent amour que l'on conçoit pour Jésus-Christ au souvenir de toutes les merveilles qu'il a faites pour nous témoigner sa tendresse, et surtout dans le Sacrement de l' Eucharistie, qu'est le miracle de son amour." (CROISET, *op. cit.,* vol. I, p. 6.)

[2] "L'objet particulier de cette dévotion, est l'amour immense de Fils de Dieu, qui l'a porté à se livrer pour nous à la mort, et à se donner tout à nous dans le très saint-Sacrement de l'Autel, sans que la vue de toutes les ingratitudes et de tous les outrages qu'il devoit recevoir en cet état de victime immolée jusqu'à la fin des siècles, ait pu l'empêcher de faire ce prodige." (CROISET, *op. cit.,* vol. I, p. 1.)

Father Croiset, though he does not leave us in doubt as to the created love.

IV. Father Galliffet in one of his chapters speaks of the love of Jesus for men. "What is man by nature," he asks, "in the sight of God? Dust and ashes. But what did he become through sin? The enemy of God, the slave of the demon, condemned to eternal death. In this condition deserving only the contempt and hatred of the Saint of Saints, Jesus loved him and formed the design of rescuing him from the evils which beset him, and of bestowing on him infinite benefits. And in what way did He manifest the greatness of His love? He offered Himself to His Father for these criminals, to bear in their stead the torments they had merited." [1] The *love of Jesus which formed the design of rescuing man* is differentiated here from the one *which induced Him to offer Himself to His Heavenly Father.* The distinction between the two is quite apparent. The former is the increated love, the latter is the created love. This is the only passage in the whole work of Father Galliffet where the two loves are pointed out with such precision.

V. Bishop Languet did not fail to express himself on this subject. "If it were imperative," he says, "to point out in detail the object of this devotion, I would say that by the Heart of Jesus Christ, the God-man, we understand principally the desires, the affections and the sentiments with which this divine Heart was filled while on earth and which still stimulate it in Heaven, whether towards God for whose glory He became man, or towards men whose salvation He wished to procure by His Incarnation and death." [2] *The sentiments and affections which actuated the Son of*

[1] GALLIFFET, *op. cit.,* part II, ch. II, pp. 87 and 88.

[2] "Sous le nom de Coeur sacré de Jesus-Christ fait homme pour nous, on entend principalement des désires, les affections, les sentiments qui occupoient de Coeur divin sur la terre, et qui l'occupent encore dans le ciel soit à l'égard de Dieu, pour la gloire duquel il s'est fait homme, soit à l'égard des hommes mêmes, dont il a voulu procurer le salut par son incarnation et par sa mort." (LANGUET, *op. cit., Discours,* p. XLIV.)

God to become man for the glory of God and for our salvation imply a pre-existent agent, in other words, they refer to the increated love.

VI. Bucceroni in his Commentary makes a clear distinction between the two loves. "The love of Christ," he says, "inasmuch as it is increated, is something indistinct from the Divinity, hence, it carries with it an inherent reason for adoration. Inasmuch as it is created, it resides in the soul of Christ, which is hypostatically united to the Logos, and for this reason has a claim to adoration." [1] He does not mean to give an equal importance to the two loves when they are considered in the light of an object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, but he makes it plain that a comprehensive notion of the formal object presupposes the inclusion of the increated love.

VII. Muzzarelli refers frequently to these two loves, but fails to give a clear idea of the increated love. However, it may be legitimately presumed that he advocated the opinion which means to include the latter love as a partial object in the devotion. "It is most certain," he says, "that the will and the love of the divine nature of Jesus Christ is altogether different from His human love and nature, and that the love of the divine nature is increated, immanent, infinite, while that of the human nature is a created love, ineffable, indeed, but of a finite entity." [2]

[1] "Unde Cor illud cultum et adorationem exigit, non solum quia Cor Christi, verum etiam quia symbolum charitatis Christi. Et sane, *charitas ista Christi, quatenus increata charitas est, in ipsa anima Christi residet, res est Divinitate ipsa realiter indistincta,* adeoque rationem in se exhibet cultus et adorationis; *quatenus vero charitas creata est, in ipsa anima Christi residet,* Verbo hypostatice unita; et, quod consequens est, rationem etiam suppeditat cultus et adorationis." (Bucceroni, *Commentarii de SS. Corde Jesu,* Romae, 1896, p. 15.)

[2] "Cela posé, il est encore très-certain, que la volonté et l'amour de la nature divine en Jésus-Christ, est tout-à-fait distingué de la volonté et de l'amour de sa nature humaine; et que *l'amour de la nature divine est un amour increé, immanent, infini, et l'amour de sa nature humaine est un amour créé,* ineffable à la vérité, mais d'un entité finie." (Muzzarelli, *op. cit.,* p. 8.)

VIII. Franzelin fails to make a mention of the increated love. On the contrary, he maintains that the Heart of Christ manifests theandric affections and is the symbol of the love and of the interior life of the Redeemer, God-man.[1] Father Vermeersch intimates that Franzelin wishes to confine the formal object to the created love.

IX. Father Ramière, who devoted his whole life to the interpretation and propagation of this devotion, is very explicit when treating of this double love. "The increated love, the eternal love is not alien to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In fact the soul of Jesus from its creation was sanctified by this love, and His human love was, so to say, entirely compenetrated by the same. If in the devotion to the Sacred Heart the human love is the direct object of our homages, the increated love is the motive which ennobles and stimulates them."[2]

X. The statement of Father Vignat is very *à propos*. The love of the human nature of Christ is only an instrument on which the love of His divine nature is acting. Therefore, we cannot comprehend the one thoroughly without seeing the other manifesting itself simultaneously.[3]

XI. Bainvel contends that the created love of Christ is set in motion by His increated love. Therefore, the latter is united to the former by the intimate link of causality. He admits that the increated love does not find its direct echo in the fleshy Heart, but

[1] Franzelin, *De Verbo Incarnato*, Rome, 1874, p. 458.

[2] "L'amour incréé, l'amour éternel n'est assurément pas étranger à la dévotion du Sacré Coeur. En effet l'âme de Jésus a été dès sa création sanctifiée par cet amour, et son amour humain en a été pour ainsi dire entièrement compénétré. *Et si, dans la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, l'amour humain est l'objet direct de nos hommages, le second amour, l'amour incréé, est le motif qui les ennoblit et les rehausse.*" (Ramière, *Messenger du Coeur de Jésus*, an. 1868, vol. XIV, p. 277.)

[3] "Dans la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, on ne peut séparer les deux amours. La raison profonde en est que l'amour de la nature humaine du Christ n'est que l'instrument de l'amour de sa nature divine. Je ne puis bien connaître l'un, sans voir en même temps qu'il exprime et manifeste l'autre. (Vignat, in the *Etudes Rel.*, an. 1906, vol. CVII, p. 646.)

its sounds reverberate in that Heart by having produced this created echo, viz., the love of the carnal Heart.[1]

XII. Father Roothan may be considered an advocate of the opinion which excludes the increated love from the devotion to the Sacred Heart. By the love of the Sacred Heart he means only that love which induced Jesus Christ to become our victim during His whole life, after His conception, but, above all, in His passion and death and in the Blessed Eucharist.[2]

XIII. Alvéry is the staunchest advocate in favor of the non-separation of the two loves in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. He points out clearly that the created love is not adored as taken by itself, but as united with the increated love. He does not censure those who relegate the increated love to the background by reserving the foreground for the created love. But he insists that, while in our worship the latter may take the first place, such a fact would not militate against the possibility of rendering honors to the former. Through the created love one must endeavor to reach the increated love. While we may tarry awhile at the first, we must not stop there, but it is our duty to contemplate the love which is absolutely infinite.[3]

XIV. Father Vermeersch, who was instrumental in creating a wide interest and discussion on the subject under consideration, gives expression to the view that in the strict sense the complete object of the devotion is the Word of God loving us in His human nature. In a more comprehensive sense it is the Word of God loving us with that increated love which induced Him to descend from Heaven on earth, and with that created love which manifested itself especially on Calvary and in the Blessed Eucharist. The spe-

[1] Bainvel, *op. cit.*, col. 292.

[2] Roothan, *De cultu SS. Cordis Jesu*, p. 13; ib. Vermeersch, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 41

[3] *Revue Augustinienne*, tom. X, an. 1907, p. 565.

cial object, in the strict sense, is the Heart of Christ symbolizing His created charity, and in a wider sense the same Heart as symbolizing the created and the increated love.[1]

We shall refrain from multiplying quotations to show the differences of opinion among the present-day theologians. It could be stated, however, that the variances in some instances are very irrelevant. Some wish to exclude the increated love, others again maintain that it must be included as a partial formal object. Those who would leave out the increated love support their arguments with the statement that the early exponents of this devotion gave very little, or no consideration at all, to the notion of the preincarnate love. This contention is admissible, but it does not justify their conclusion. It is not legitimate to infer that the early spiritual writers meant to exclude the increated love, because they accentuated the idea of the created love to the detriment of the former. Their attitude in this matter may be explained by the fact that the Church, for a long time, gave no expression to her belief in this respect, and they did not feel justified in taking the initiative.

It is rather surprising that even at this late date a lack of uniformity prevails on this point among the theologians. This is traceable to the fact that the decrees of the Sacred Congregation are not sufficiently explicit. It may be said that, while certain pronouncements warrant the inclusion of the increated love in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, these are mostly indirect utterances. Thus, the field is open for speculative consideration, not, however, to such an extent as to exclude the increated love entirely. We

[1] "Dans un sens strict, l'objet complet de la dévotion au sacré Coeur, c'est le Dieu-Verbe nous aimant dans sa nature humaine. Dans un sens plus large, c'est le Dieu-Verbe nous aimant d'une charité increée qui Le fait descendre sur la terre, et d'une charité créée, qui s'est manifestée surtout au Calvaire et dans l'Eucharistie. Et l'objet special, c'est au sens strict, le Coeur du Christ avec la charité créée et increée qu'il symbolise, et, au sens large, ce même Coeur avec la charité créée et increée symbolisée par Lui." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. I, art. V, p. 98.)

shall explain this last statement by citing some of those decrees which directly concern the formal object, and are calculated to shed light on this point.

The *Memorial* of the Polish Bishops was instrumental in bringing about the approbation contained in the decree dated Jan. 26, 1765 That this *Memorial* makes no explicit mention of the increated love of Christ is a well-known fact. But, Father Vermeersch contends, that the devotion was approved as proposed by the Polish Bishops. Therefore, he concludes, the Church by such a decree meant to confine the formal object to the created love. Needless to say that such an inference is unwarrantable. Nor could it be justified on the ground that the subsequent decrees of Pius VI and Pius IX likewise fail to make a special mention of the increated love.

The first decree which gives us an inkling that the pre-incarnate love is to be included in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, was given on Febr. 6, 1765. In this it is stated that the approved Mass and Office are intended to commemorate symbolically that divine love under the impulse of which the only Begotten Son of God, took upon Himself human nature, and becoming obedient unto death wished thereby to give an example to men as One who is meek and humble of Heart.[1]

Father Vermeersch would not permit any one to be influenced in his decision by this particular decree, for, as he maintains, it was suppressed by the Congregation of the Sacred Rites, when it revised all its decrees to publish an authentic edition. To eliminate useless or contradictory decrees is, according to Father Vermeersch, the reason generally given for this revision.

[1] Respondit Congregatio Sacrorum Rituum, "huius Missae et Officii celebratione non aliud agi, quam ampliari cultum iam institutum et symbolice renovari memoriam illius divini amoris; quo Unigenitus Dei Flius humanam suscepit naturam, et factus obediens usque ad mortem, praebere se dixit exemplum hominibus, quod esset mitis et humilis corde." (NILLES, *op. cit.*, cap. III, p. 81.)

Since, however, no official decision was rendered explanatory of the suppression of this particular decree, it would be futile to conjecture the causes leading to such a step. However, there is a good ground to suppose that the cause of its suppression is not to be sought in the supposition that it was contradictory to some previous decrees. Our reason for this statement is the following:

On Apr. 4, 1900, the Sacred Congregation rendered a decision concerning the Scapular of the Sacred Heart. This particular decree is not suppressed, yet, some of the words in which it is couched are practically identical with those contained in the suppressed decree. Now, it is not likely that the words of a decree, once erased for the reason that they were contradictory to others, would be repeated. It also goes to prove that the elimination of the decree was not due to the groundless supposition that its words admitted an interpretation which the Church wished to obviate. "To the religious solemnities," the decree states, "we are to add the one instituted by the Church in honor of the Sacred Heart. By this solemnity the Church does not mean to put before us *only* the Heart of the Son of God and man, as an object worthy of adoration and glorification, but *it also intends to commemorate symbolically the memory of that divine love, which induced the only Begotten Son of God to assume human nature,* and being obedient unto death, exhibited to men examples of virtues, and showed Himself as one possessing a humble and meek Heart." [1] That *divine love, under the impulse of which the only Begotten Son of God and man assumed human nature* is therefore included as being solemn-

[1] "Inter has (celebritates) accensenda est solemnitas in honorem Sacri Cordis Jesu ab Ecclesia instituta, per quam non modo Cor Filii Dei et hominis adorandum et glorificandum proponitur sed etiam symbolice renovatur memoria illius divini amoris, quo idem Unigenitus Dei Filius humanam suscepit naturam, et factus obediens usque ad mortem, praebuit hominibus exempla virtutum, seque ostendit mitem et humilem corde." (*Acta Sanctae Sedis,* tom. XXXII, p. 631.)

ized by the Feast in honor of the Sacred Heart. It is evident that the above love corresponds perfectly with the definition of the increated love. The decree combines the two loves, and while it seems to give preference to the created love, it does not ignore the increated love. They are both to be conjointly commemorated as symbolized by the Heart.

Another decree issued in 1821 conveys the same idea and may be adduced as another proof in favor of the increated love. "The Feast of the Sacred Heart," it states, "recalls to us *the immense love, which actuated the Word to become incarnate for our ransom and salvation;* which induced Him to institute the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and to bear our sins, as well as to offer Himself on the cross as a victim and sacrifice." [1]

The hymn of the Vespers to be said on the Feast of the Sacred Heart may be adduced as an additional proof in favor of the above proposition.

The pre-incarnate love in this receives a prominence especially in the second and third verses.

"Thee Saviour *love alone constrained*
To make our mortal flesh thine own,
And, as a second Adam, come
For the first Adam to atone.

That self-same love which made the sky,
Which made the sea and stars and earth
Took pity on our misery,
And broke the bondage of our birth." [2]

[1] Nilles, *op. cit.*, lib. I, p. 1, cap. III, par. 5; ib. Alvéry, in the *Rev. Augustinienne,* tom. X, p. 183.)

[2] "Amor coegit te Deus
Mortale corpus sumere
Ut novus Adam redderes
Quod vetus ille abstulerat.
Ille amor almus artifex
Terrae marisque et siderum,
Errata patrum miserans,
Et nostra rumpens vincula."
(Brev. Rom. *Pars Aest. Festum SS. Cordis.*)

This verse is of no importance in the estimation of Father Vermeersch. "One should not adduce metrified stanzas," he remarks, "to contradict the express teaching contained in the lessons of the Office." [1] Be that as it may, the poetical expression of that love nevertheless has some force. Had it been unliturgical or contradictory to the concept entertained on this subject by ecclesiastical authority, it would not have merited their approbation.

Some spiritual writers see an adumbration of the increated love even in the sixth lesson of the Office where reference is made to the suffering and to the dying love, as well as to the love which was instrumental in instituting the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Such inference, however, cannot be justified, for all these characteristics may be attributed in a more appropriate sense to the created love which is to be viewed as being united to the Divinity.

As a secondary proof one could adduce some invocations taken from the Litany of the Sacred Heart approved by the Sacred Congregation on Apr. 2, 1899. In the 21st invocation we pray: *Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness.* In the 28th invocation we call the Heart of Christ: *Our life and Resurrection.* In the 14th invocation we speak of this Heart as containing: *All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* While all the above attributes may be predicated of the Heart of Christ without being brought into correlation with His pre-incarnate love, there is not sufficient reason why they should be confined to the created love. The 21st and 28th invocation brings the Heart of Christ into relation with life. Why should the Church in the same Litany make use of two invocations whose meaning is almost the same? Would it not be more appropriate to interpret the Heart in the 21st invo-

[1] "Mais, nous l'avons déjà observé s'il y avait une opposition, il est clair que l'on ne saurait alléguer des strophes assujetties au mètre, pour objecter contre les enseignements précis des lecons de l'office." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. I, art. V, p. 61.)

cation as symbolizing the love shown by Christ in our creation? In this case the 28th invocation could be interpreted as referring to our spiritual re-birth through the mystery of the Redemption. Thus the Heart would suggest to our mind the idea of the created as well as of the increated love.

It must be admitted that the evidence adduced thus far is not conclusive. Up to the present the Church has not determined clearly the nature and the extent of the love which constitutes the whole formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The above decisions, however, carry sufficient weight to induce any one to accept the increated love as a partial formal object. In order to come to a more definite conclusion it will be necessary to appeal to a few generally accepted theological principles.

CHAPTER X.

SPECULATIVE CONSIDERATION OF CREATED AND INCREATED LOVE.

The finite mind of man cannot fathom the inscrutable mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Our reason, however, dictates that since we are to distinguish three divine Persons, *tres sunt volentes, sed unica voluntas.* This conclusion is necessitated by the oneness of the Divine Essence and the harmony which we know must needs exist among the three divine Persons. To each Person we must attribute a share in the mystery of the Incarnation. It is true that only the second Person of the Blessed Trinity became really incarnate, but this plan could not be actualized without the co-operation of the other two. The Redemption by the Son of God and His Incarnation were decreed from all eternity. Since such an intimate relationship was to exist between mankind and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, it may be maintained that the same Person played an important role in the creation of man. Though the love of God the Son towards mankind was not actualized in a tangible way for us till the Incarnation, it really existed from all eternity, and the creation may be considered as the first ray of its manifestation.

It would be preferable to call this love pre-incarnate rather than increated. The latter implies the plenitude of the love of the Logos, while the former brings His love into correlation with the Incarnation, thus characterizing and defining it more clearly. Thus the term *pre-incarnate* suggests the idea of the creature towards whom this love has been exhibited, and this is the idea to be conveyed.

It is easy to conceive a love of God the Son which actuated Him to co-operate in our creation. We can also picture to ourselves a love in this second Person of the Blessed Trinity, which induced Him to take upon Himself human nature, and to subject Himself voluntarily to all the subsequent sorrows. It is precisely this latter love which the decree referred to above permits to be included in the formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In a previous chapter it has been pointed out that this love was not annihilated in Christ in consequence of the assumption of human nature, but continued to exist in the Logos.

This particular love, however, is not to be confined to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity so as to exclude the other two. But, to show a special worship for justifiable reasons to this specified love of God the Son towards us, it may be considered as peculiar to Him by way of appropriation.

In the earthly life of Christ it is possible to point out human, divine and mixed acts. Though one divine Person, He possessed two natures, two wills, therefore, two loves. All His acts were subordinated to His divine will and love. His divine nature makes use of the operation of the human nature, as of the operation of its instrument, and in the same way His human nature shares in the operation of the divine nature as an instrument shares in the operation of the principal agent.[1]

Thus, it is always the ever-existing Person that is acting. The words He expresses are eternal truths. His divine intellect tries to put the words of eternal wisdom into such language as our imperfect understanding can grasp. Hence, the use of parables for the sake of illustration. Man is so constituted that by means of a

[1] "Divina natura utitur operatione naturae humanae, sicut operatione sui instrumenti; et similiter humana natura participat operationem divinae naturae, sicut instrumentum participat operationem 'principalis agentis." (St. Thomas, p. III, qu .XIX, art. I.)

visible image he can more easily form a concept of something invisible. The importance of this truism is accentuated by St. Paul when he expresses Himself to the effect that: "The invisible things of Him (God), from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." [1]

In order to exemplify in a visible manner the love of God towards mankind Christ employed His human nature. It is for this reason that He was made in the likeness of man, [2] and in the habit found as a man, but without sin.[3] He made use of the same words, and meant to convey the same meaning by them as men ordinarily do. Therefore, the words He used on the occasion of His apparition to Blessed Margaret Mary, viz., *Behold the Heart which has loved men so much* are to be interpreted in their obvious signification. The word *heart* in this connection ought not to be deprived of the wealth of meaning which the popular mind in common parlance is accustomed to associate with such a term. We know, as a matter of fact, that its symbolism has never been limited to the created love for, in the Old Testament, it symbolized the love of God. This latter symbolism of the heart, therefore, refers to the plenitude of that purely divine love of which the pre-incarnate love is only a part. Hence, it would be rather difficult to adduce convincing arguments to justify the statement of those theologians who maintain that the symbolical representation of the Heart in the New Testament has narrowed down to the created love.

God was pleased with the Temple Solomon erected in His honor. "I have chosen, and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there forever, and my eyes and my *heart* may remain there perpetually." [4] The word *heart* in this passage has always been taken as

[1] *Rom.* I. 20.
[2] *Phil.* II. 7.
[3] *Heb.* IV. 15.
[4] II. *Par.* VII. 16.

a metaphorical expression for God's love. Without multiplying examples we can see that the word *heart* may symbolize even that love which the divine Persons entertained for us before the Incarnation.

Again, the Heart which Christ showed to Blessed Margaret Mary was a creation of the pre-incarnate love. It is not the created love which induced the second Person of the Blessed Trinity to become incarnate, for the mystery of the Incarnation is prior to this love. Nor did the created love conceive the institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, it was only a contributory motive and a co-operative cause in the act of executing the plan proposed by a purely divine Agent. It is admitted by all spiritual writers that in the devotion to the Sacred Heart we worship the created love of Christ inasmuch as it inspired Him to embrace death for us, and remain with us in the Holy Eucharist. But what reason can be given to justify the exclusion of that love which brought into existence this created love, and without which the Incarnation and the institution of the Blessed Eucharist would not have been rendered possible. Some writers contend that Christ did not intend to give such a comprehensive meaning to the words: *Voilà ce coeur qui a tant aimé les hommes.* It is a gratuitous assumption which may be answered by saying that no man is in a position to ascertain with certainty the mind of Christ in this respect, nor can any one be sure that such an utterance is calculated to confine the meaning of the above words to the created love alone.

The advocates of this limited interpretation bring forth proofs which are very plausible but far from being convincing. Christ, they say, meant to establish a special cult to His love. He wished also that we pay a very special tribute to His Heart which played such an important part in the Redemption of mankind by the shedding of its blood. The latter having such an intimate rapport with love facilitated His design, and thus the two became united. St.

Thomas says that in every movement of the soul there is an increase or decrease in the natural movement of the heart, according as the heart is moved more or less intensely by the systole and dyastole.[1] Even the Sacred Scripture seems to refer to such an internal agitation.[2] Therefore, He who was meek and humble of Heart,[3] intended to introduce the worship only of that love in which this physical Heart co-operated to some extent, and of which it may justly be considered as a symbol.

Though hardly any theologian would hesitate to subscribe to the above reasoning, it may still be questioned whether there is sufficient evidence to justify the exclusion of the increated love. It is undeniable that the fleshy Heart of Christ cannot symbolize the increated love in the same way in which it is the true symbol of the created love, not only because there is a physiological basis for the latter, but also because a general conventionality adopts such a usage. Besides, the Sacred Scripture permits us to view the heart as the seat in which the created love of Christ resided. To predicate the same relationship between the created Heart and the increated love would be a physiological as well as a theological error. The pre-incarnate love, as considered by itself, separated from the humanity of Christ, did not need to make use of the Heart, while the created love was always bound to enter into some relation with it. Just as it is improper to say that Jesus, according to His divine nature, thought by means of His brain, it is likewise incorrect to assert that according to the same nature He loved us by means of His Heart. Father LeDoré speaks of the continued reciprocal influence which he imagines to have existed between the two loves. He also insists on the *repercussions of the created*

[1] "In omni passione animae additur aliquid, vel diminuitur a naturali motu cordis; inquantum cor intensius, vel remissius movetur, secundum systolem, aut diastolem." (St. Thomas, IaIIae, qu. XXIV, a. II, ad 2um.)

[2] *Luke* XXIV. 32.

[3] *Matt.* XI. 29.

love on the increated love. Father Vermeersch remarks that we should not indulge too much in this anthropomorphic aspect. The increated love, he contends, does not produce a sensible emotion in the Heart except by a miracle, hence, how could it be symbolized, at least immediately, by a Heart which is always in motion, and whose movement is varied.[1]

Here again it must be emphasized that no one should consider the Heart as a direct or immediate symbol of Christ's pre-incarnate love. We are all aware of the fact that the increated love existed before the Heart, it acted without this Heart, and it was the cause of this Heart's existence. Therefore, the pre-incarnate love, being in time prior to the Heart, cannot be represented by this physical organ to the same extent as may be claimed for the created love which began to exist simultaneously with the Heart.

As regards the created love, the Heart in this connection is not to be taken metaphorically, but symbolically. It must be borne in mind that the decrees of the Sacred Congregation speak of the Heart only as a symbol of love, but they do not represent it as the seat or organ of love. Father Vermeersch in his work lays great stress on this point, for it is an important factor of the devotion. We must not lose sight of the *ratio significatus.* Therefore, directly and immediately the Heart as a symbol can convey only the idea of a created love. But is there anything to prevent the supposition that, taken metaphorically, it may also serve to express the increated love?

Man placed on this earth is by necessity compelled to make use of the visible things, by means of which he can ascend higher.

[1] "Acte unique, éternel, immuable d'une volonté toujours paisible et heureuse, l'amour increé ne produirait que par miracle une émotion sensible au coeur; et comment serait-il symbolisé, au moins immédiatement, par un coeur toujours en mouvement et en mouvement varié?" (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, vol. II, ch. I, part. V, p. 68.)

After we have viewed the Heart as the direct symbol reserved for the created love, must we needs stop there without attempting to reach the realm of the Divinity, in order thus to contemplate the increated love? Should not our worship always tend to the absolutely infinite? Why, then, should it terminate in something that is only relatively infinite, as the love of Christ (*amor Dei-virilis*) elicited by the Person of the Logos through the instrumentality of human nature? Hence, it would seem to be perfectly legitimate to consider the heart as it was viewed in the Old Testament, viz., as being capable of representing metaphorically even a purely divine love.

Again, it is clear that the fleshy Heart of Christ in this connection cannot emblemize metaphorically all the increated love of the three divine Persons. The Second Divine Person was destined from all eternity to enter into a relationship with mankind which was not to be attributed to the other two. In the Blessed Trinity *tres sunt volentes, sed una voluntas, ergo tres sunt amantes sed unus amor.* By way of appropriation we refer to the love under the impulse of which He became incarnate in order to make possible the Redemption. The decree of Apr. 4, 1900, expressly mentions such a love, and points to it as one which is to be commemorated in the devotion to the Sacred Heart.[1]

That there is nothing to militate against the assumption of such a love we can prove by theological arguments. The Sacred Scripture tells us that "God so loved the world, as to give His only Begotten Son."[2] This passage attributes a love to God the Father which is His own in a special way. While the love of the other

[1] "Symbolice commemoratur memoria illius divini amoris, quo idem Unigenitus Dei Filius humanam suscepit naturam . . ." (*Acta Sanctae Sedis*, vol. XXII, p. 631.)

[2] *John* III. 16.

two Persons is not excluded, we can also say that it is appropriated in a special way to the Father. Thus we may say that "God so loved the world as to become man." In this love we likewise include all the three Persons, but the love of God the Son would stand out more prominently, though merely by way of appropriation. Therefore, this love, appropriated to the second Person, according to the human way of conceiving, had a characteristic differentiating it from the love of the other two Persons. Such is the increated love which is to be included as a partial formal object in the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

To confine the formal object of the devotion to the created love, it is necessary that either there should be a special pronouncement to that effect on the part of the Church, or some very imperative reason should dictate such a course, e.g., the spiritual welfare of the faithful. In the present instance neither of these reasons can be adduced. On the contrary, there are, on the one hand, specific decrees permitting the inference that the increated love is not to be excluded, and, on the other hand, the spiritual benefit accruing from the devotion would be greater, and the devotion would be established on a firmer basis, if the pre-incarnate love were included as constituting a part of the formal object. Father Vignat, censuring the opinions of those who advocate the exclusion of the increated love, remarks that if their views were accepted, then the faithful could not even make an act of love by means of this devotion. If we love Jesus Christ, he says, solely because he loved us as man, we do not make an act of charity. Such an act presupposes not only that we love God, but that we love Him for His own sake, on account of some supreme excellence, or a certain aspect of His infinite perfection. The love which one has for Jesus Christ is indeed directed to God Himself by virtue of the hypostatic union. But, if my love has for its motive a perfection of His human nature only, then my act would fail to be an act of

charity, though it may be considered as a preparatory step leading to it.[1]

Again, we perceive in our age a tendency to use the emotional side of our nature for a perverse end. This emotionalism is directed in the proper channel by the attractiveness of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. But we must be on our guard against a danger. While we ought to make use of all the licit means to foster a holy sentimentalism in this respect, we should not stop until we can cast anchor in something more stable, in the sea of infinite love, where we find only one sentiment, and that unchanging. Why should one tarry on the way to admire created beauty, when he may ascend higher, thus to revel in the vision of the increated love to which all things owe their being?

Therefore, it would seem that there is no particular advantage in excluding the pre-incarnate love from this devotion. The end of man is the beatific vision of God. He ought to strive to come as near to the realization of this end as his human nature will permit during his terrestrial sojourn. The means to attain this end are those which the true religion offers especially by means of the various devotions. By means of the created Heart, we can directly ascend to the created love, and, using the manifestations of this as a ladder, we should mount to that increated and absolutely infinite love which the second Person of the Blessed Trinity elicited towards us when He engaged to assume the burden of a

[1] Or, si nous limitons l'objet de la dévotion à l'amour créé de Jésus-Christ; si nous aimons Notre-Seigneur uniquement parce qu'il nous a aimés comme homme, nous ne faisons pas un acte de charité. L'acte de cette vertu théologale requiert en effet, non seulement que nous aimions Dieu, mais que nous l'aimions pour lui-même, c'est-à-dire à cause de son excellence suprême ou du moins à cause d'un aspect de son infinie perfection. L'amour que je porte à Jésus-Christ s'adresse bien, en vertu de l'union hypostatique, à Dieu lui-même; mais si mon amour a pour motif une perfection ou une amabilité de sa nature humaine, je ferai un acte excellent sans doute, un acte qui pourra préparer l'acte de charité; mais ce ne sera pas cet acte même. (VIGNAT, in the *Etudes Rel.*, vol. CVII, p. 652.)

vicarious satisfaction. Furthermore, it is a mistake to distinguish to such a pronounced degree between the two loves. All admit that there are two loves in Christ corresponding to His two wills and two natures. But it is only one and the same Person that wills and loves. All the acts must eventually be referred to the Logos. We may, indeed, consider the two loves abstracted in so far as the subordinate love will help us to arrive at the realization of the superior love, but we should not pause at the former. This created love is to be considered as *terminus per quem,* in contradistinction to the increated love which is to be viewed as the *terminus ad quem.*

Those in favor of the separation of these two loves anticipate a danger of heresy from their union. The prominence assigned to the created love by means of which the increated is to be reached, ought to obviate all possibility of falling into the heresy of either the Monophysites or the Monothelites.

Father Vermeersch hesitates to subscribe to the priciples enunciated above on account of certain authoritative statements which apparently are in contradiction with such views. He brings up the words of Benedict XIV, and the Encyclical of Leo XIII. These, he maintains, militate against accepting the word heart in such a *heteroclitic* sense as to consider it a symbol of the increated love. But, since the heart was the object of such a symbolism in the Old Covenant, the metaphorical meaning attached to it in the New Testament is not quite as *heteroclitic* as it would appear at first sight. However, in order that the foregoing statements may retain their force, it will be necessary to reconcile them with the words of Benedict XIV and the Encyclical of Leo XIII.

Benedict XIV states that no Feast in honor of Christ is directed to God the Son as the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. All the Feasts worship Him as God-man, representing the special

graces and deep mysteries which the Incarnate Word wrought for the salvation of mankind.[1]

It must be admitted that these words may be interpreted as militating against the conclusion established in the preceding pages. The increated love is the love of God the Son as such. It is altogether distinct from the *amor Dei-virilis,* therefore, we are introducing into the Feast of the Sacred Heart an object which apparently conflicts with the teaching of Benedict XIV, who denies that such an honor may be paid to the Logos viewed abstracted from human nature. But, it is likewise easy to see that the great Pontiff in the above extract had in mind a direct worship of the Logos. If we advocated a direct cult to be paid to the increated love, then our teaching would be irreconcilable with his words. Such, however, is not the present contention. It is true that the Feast of the Sacred Heart is instituted in honor of the fleshy Heart as it symbolizes the created love of Christ directly. But the symbolism of the same Heart may be extended in a wider sense to the increated love also. Therefore, this latter love we worship indirectly. If anyone contend that it is unreasonable to combine two such dissimilar elements in one and the same devotion, Father Vignat answers that this union is necessitated by the mystery of the Incarnation.[2]

The Encyclical of Leo XIII can in no way be interpreted as gainsaying the foregoing conclusion. Father Vermeersch fails to paraphrase it correctly. This letter *"Divinum illud"* expresses the same idea as we find in the works of Benedict XIV, but it is somewhat modified. "Though by certain Feasts," it says, "we cele-

[1] "Festa omnia, quorum celebritas ad Christi honorem refertur, non diriguntur ad Filium, tamquam ad secundam Sanctissimae Trinitatis Personam, sed omnia sunt festa Christi, sive Dei facti hominis, representantia singulares gratias et altissima mysteria, quae verbum incarnatum operatum est ad humani generis salutem" (*De Beat. et Can.,* I. IV, pars. II, cap. XXXI, n. 3.)

[2] VIGNAT, *loc. cit.,* p. 646.

brate the various mysteries of the incarnate Word, we do not celebrate by a proper Feast the Word according to His divine nature *only*."[1] The modifier, *tantum* (*only*), favors our proposition inasmuch as we do not contend that we worship the increated love *only*, but that *also, and indirectly*.

Again, even if these two documents did militate against the acceptation of some of the above conclusions, it must be borne in mind that they are not apodictic proofs, as Father Alvéry remarks, against which there is no higher appeal before the tribunal of human reason.[2] Though their argumentative force cannot be denied, it is likewise true, that they do not possess a "sovereign value." Furthermore, it could be added that the first contains only a semblance of contradiction against our conclusion, while the second could hardly be interpreted as militating against it. Therefore, there is no reason to question the view advocated in this chapter.

Father Vermeersch is very reluctant to extend the symbolism of the physical Heart to the increated love. By subtilizing those decrees of the Sacred Congregation which were interpreted above as referring to the increated love, he maintains that they do not necessarily imply the idea imputed to them. Towards the end of his article, however, he assumes a more conciliatory tone, and the following is his concluding remark. One might say that the heart of a person symbolizes his love. But the Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the Word. Therefore, it symbolizes the love of the Word. He distinguishes the major proposition. The heart of a person who possesses only one nature may symbolize that person's love, he concedes; to say the same about the heart of a person who possesses

[1] Quod si singula incarnati Verbi mysteria certis diebus festis celebrantur, non tamen proprio ullo festo celebratur Verbum, secundum divinam tantum naturam." (*Acta Sanctae Sedis*, tom. XXIX, p. 646.)

[2] "Ils ne constituent pas ce qu'on appelle une démonstration apodictique contre laquelle il n'est plus d'appel au tribunal de la raison humaine." (Alvéry, *loc. cit.*, p. 566.)

two natures, he subdistinguishes: it may symbolize the love of the same nature of that person, he concedes; the love of another nature than His own, he again subdsitinguishes: as nearly and in the same way, he denies; in a different way and remotely, he admits.[1]

To clarify the explanation of the increated love, the question may be raised which of these two loves is the primary and which the secondary formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart? Some of the statements made concerning the primariness and the secondariness existing between the material and the formal objects may help us here, but they must be applied with due limitation.

An object may be primary either in the order of time, or by reason of excellence. If we address ourselves first to the Heart, and by means of it try to come to the realization of the love, then, in the order of time the Heart is the primary object, and the love the secondary, and *vice versa*. Of the two loves which constitute the formal object of the devotion, the primary by reason of excellence is the increated love. But the spirit of the devotion to the Sacred Heart will not permit that this particular love be our primary object in the order of time. Such a love has no connection with the Heart. Therefore, if one viewed it in its absolute excellence, he would, indeed, practice the highest cult of love, but it would not be within the domain of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In order that the pre-incarnate love may be included in this devotion it must be arrived at through the medium of the Heart. Hence, one may speak of the primariness and the secondariness of the two loves only from the point of view of excellence, in which case the created is inferior to the increated.

Theologians agree that latria is the cult to be paid to the humanity of Christ. Some of them raise the question with what worship should it be honored if viewed in abstraction from the divinity?

[1] VERMEERSCH, *op cit.*, tom. II, ch. I, art. V, p. 71.

They are practically unanimous in concluding that the worship in such a case should be hyperdulia. But such an abstraction appears offensive to many of them, for every person ought to be paid the highest honor that he deserves for the highest reason his dignity requires. The same principle could be applied in this case. It is offensive to separate the two loves in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and pay honor to the Person of the Logos for only a relatively highest love when there is a sufficient reason to justify such a worship for an absolutely highest love. In other words, why should the Heart symbolize only the love which wept with Lazarus, and not also the one which created him. It is true that the Heart had a vital relation with the first and only an imagined one with the second, but, it is likewise true that, unless the two loves are viewed together, we fail to represent the whole love of the Person of Christ towards mankind.

Again, all the acts are to be referred to the person. But, if the person assumes the responsibility for all his acts, he is to be viewed in the light of all of them collectively. Since the Person of Christ elicited a created and an increated love, we would fail to view Him in the light of all His acts, in case we ignored those which He performed through the impulse of the pre-incarnate love.

Father Alvéry censures those who are inclined to advocate such a definite line of demarcation between the two loves. He argues that the human nature of the Word is perfect in its entity, decrowned only of its human personality. The personality is the principle of action. The human nature of Christ, nevertheless, is acting on its own resources, but, because it is the property of the Word, someone else assumes the responsibility for its acts. It follows that the Heart beats under the free love of the human nature, and directly and immediately symbolizes this particular love. On the other hand, this Heart and this love appertain to the Word because the actions are always referred to the Person, hence, they can be

called divine. Therefore, this Heart which is human and divine, symbolizes necessarily this love of the Word-made-flesh. It does not follow naturally that the Heart should symbolize that love also which the Word possessed from all eternity. If we view Christ in His two natures, we see in the human nature the Heart which throbs for love of us; from this Heart and love we ascend to the Person of the Word, because they are the Heart and the love of the Son of God. From the Word we mount to the increated love, which logically is not in direct rapport with the created love, and is not in relation with it except by means of the Word, whose Person subsists in the human nature.[1]

Father Ramiére arrives at the same conclusion. "Why, then, should we be surprised," he says, "that Jesus made this human Heart and love, which animate Him, the special object of a devotion *calculated to manifest with an incomparable splendor, the infinite love which God feels towards us?* [2]

Nor would the human love in the Word-made-flesh be neutralized by this view. His body was only a usufructuary of the Divinity, therefore, it is capricious to divide the two loves as do some theologians. "Jesus," Father Vignat argues, "being only one Person in two natures, divine and human, manifests to us the whole love of His Person by His Heart, not only His created love, but His increated withal. Only in this sense, but in the fullest extent of this

[1] Alvéry, *loc. cit.*, p. 562.

[2] "Comment donc serions-nous surpris que Jésus ait fait de ce Coeur humain et de l'amour humain, qui l'anime l'objet spécial d'une dévotion destinée à manifester avec une incomparable splendeur, l'amour infini que Dieu nous porte." (*Messager du Coeur de Jésus*, vol. XIV, an. 1868, p. 279.)

sense, one may say: *Jesus as God loves us by means of His human Heart.*" [1]

Father Bainvel expresses the same truth by arguing that Jesus when appearing in His human nature, presents Himself simultaneously as a divine Person. Hence, though His Heart does not throb with the increated love, still, the created love with which it does throb is only an echo of the increated love.[2]

Thus many other modern authors could be cited who are in consonance with the opinions expressed in this chapter. Though their attention might not have extended to all the details pointed out in the course of this investigation, still, their statements, if followed to their logical conclusion, justify the supposition that they are inclined to accept such a view. How much soever Father Vermeersch may object to some of the foregoing assertions, his final statement may be quoted in confirmation of the same conclusion. "We worship," he says, "the living Heart of Jesus in order to find in it the theandric love which it symbolizes, and in order thus to elevate our thoughts through the latter till we reach the increated love, of which the theandric love itself is the supreme benefit." [3]

Finally one must not ignore the universal sentiment of the faithful which is a criterion *par excellence*, and as such an important factor in settling a disputed theological question concerning a determined and widespread devotion. It cannot be denied that the first exponents of this devotion had only a very imperfect idea of the

[1] "Jésus parce qu'il est une seule personne en deux natures, divine et humaine, nous manifeste tout l'amour de sa personne par son coeur, non seulement son amour créé mais encore son amour incréé. Dans ce sens seulement, mais dans tout ce sens, on peut dire: Jésus, en tant que Dieu, nous aime par son coeur humain." (VIGNAT, *loc. cit.*, p. 664.)

[2] BAINVEL, *loc. cit.*, col. 292.

[3] "Nous honorons le Coeur vivant de Jésus pour y trouver l'amour théandrique qu'il symbolise, et nous élever par ce dernier jusqu'à l'amour incréé, dont cet amour théandrique lui-même est un suprême bienfait." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. I, art. VI, p. 97.)

true nature and extent of the love which constitutes its formal object. But, it is likewise manifest, that they did not entirely eliminate the pre-incarnate love. They, however, laid a greater stress on the human love, elaborated upon it, and thus promulgated the devotion. They explicitated this love by bringing it into relation with all the spiritual facts which can be gathered from Christian knowledge, but, above all, from our primary empirical and intellectual intuition, viz., *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*[1] The expositional side of the devotion accentuated the human love, for it was more tangible and appealing. But from experience we know that the common people do not separate Christ from His Divinity. They view Him as God and man. Whether they are attracted by His words or works, even in His purely human manifestations, He is always God and man in their eyes. They never lose sight of His divine Personality. In every-day parlance the word *heart* connotes for them all the love a person is capable of exhibiting. While they do not make a clear-cut distinction between the created and the increated love, nevertheless, the Heart symbolizes for them the totality or plenitude of the love of the divine Person in Christ. Therefore, since the faithful fail to distinguish between the two loves, this should be an additional reason in favor of non-separation.

The foregoing remarks are not to be interpreted as advocating the fusion of the two loves into one. On the contrary, the investigation as a whole is calculated to bring out in clear relief the particular excellence and domain of each love. But it may be contended that, whereas, there is no particular reason for such a definite separation, and, whereas, the faithful mean to worship the entire love of the divine Person to whom their homages are paid, the two loves ought to be as one united formal object of the devotion.

[1] *John* I. 14.

It does not require deep theological acumen, nor a special faculty of discernment to see that the decrees of the Sacred Congregation are in favor of promulgating the devotion in this sense. It is imperative that the faithful among whom this devotion reached such a high degree of popularity should be instructed to the fullest extent on such an important factor of a devotion as the formal object must needs be. Hence, their obscure notions must be clarified, and if they entertain any erroneous ideas, it is incumbent on the teachers of the Church to root out the tares in order that the wheat may grow in their soul.

All the reasons alleged in course of the exposition of this question are based either on ecclesiastical documents or on sound theological principles. To give more force to the arguments adduced, the opinions of a few modern theologians have been quoted in the vernacular. Still, someone might take exception to the final conclusion on the ground that the devotion, in its early stage, was not promulgated in that sense. Even if it must be admitted that such an assertion is not entirely gratuitous, it would in no way militate against accepting the views advocated in the foregoing pages. To answer the above objection the reader's attention is called to the following reasoning:

The Incarnation is the foundation of Christianity. All admit that in the sense of strictly logical evolution, in which the Christian doctrine maintained its individuality and identity throughout, the word germ may be rightfully applied to express the development of dogma. The whole initial Christian knowledge is contained in one sentence, viz., *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*[1] This primitive intuition forms the basis of what may be called the present technical concept of the whole Christian doctrine. Thus our initial knowledge of the Sacred Heart may also be considered

[1] *John* I. 14.

as contained in one sentence, viz., *Behold the Heart which has loved men so much.* This is not a separate knowledge, but only a part of the original intuition or deposition. But if we may admit an evolution in the primitive Christian knowledge, in the sense above indicated, why could we not admit an evolution also in its ramifications which are indissolubly united with it. The devotion to the Sacred Heart is based on incontestible principles of Soteriology and Christology. It was approved and fostered by the Church. Under her protection it progressed, and was guided in the proper channel. She extended many privileges to its devotees, and interpreted it for them. She never checks a devotion unless it fosters superstition, nor does she define it clearly until it is almost fully developed. Her final announcements, as a rule, are indicative of the general sentiments of the faithful. In our opinion the recent decree of Apr. 4, 1900, clearly states that the Heart is to be considered as symbolizing the twofold love, hence, the question cannot be a purely speculative one, when so defined.

A brief *résumé* of the whole investigation could be presented as follows: In the devotion to the Sacred Heart, we worship the corporal Heart of the Word-made-flesh as the symbol of His love. The Heart being in physical rapport with the human love, on account of their mutual vital relationship, directly and immediately symbolizes the created love of Christ, but remotely it emblemizes His increated love also. By His increated love we mean the love which was the determinant cause of His Incarnation. The spirit of the devotion requires that we arrive at this love, by a transition of thought, through the human love which in Him is to be viewed as having a vital nexus with the fleshy Heart (*Cor Dei-virile*). Thus the total material object of the devotion is the *divino-human* (theandric) Heart of the Word-made-flesh. The total formal object of the devotion is the created and increated love which the divine Person, the Logos, had for mankind, the former being symbolized by His physical Heart proximately and the latter remotely.

CHAPTER XI.

HISTORICAL BASIS FOR THE GREAT PROMISE.

According to a letter which, as many contend, was directed by Blessed Margaret Mary to Mother de Saumaise, Our Blessed Lord promised signal spiritual favors to all those who communicate nine successive First Fridays of every month. This is called the Devotion of the Nine Fridays, and its spiritual reward is generally designated by the name of the *Great Promise*. The present chapter is devoted to a consideration of the letter above mentioned.

To obviate all possibility of misunderstanding, it is necessary, at the very outset, to emphasize the fact that we do not intend to concern ourselves with the First Friday Devotion strictly so called. That is a most salutary practice which cannot be encouraged with too much zeal and fervor. The reader's attention will be directed, almost exclusively, to those Holy Communions which, in order that their extraordinary spiritual benefits may accrue to the communicant, must be nine only in number, and must be received nine consecutive First Fridays of the month.

Before any judgment may be pronounced on this subject the procedure of historical research demands that we first examine the document in which the promise in question was circulated. Our investigation shows that the belief in such an extraordinary efficacy of nine Holy Comunions, when received in compliance with the prescribed conditions, is based upon a certain letter, the date of which as ordinarily assigned is May, 1688. Referring to the question of its date in one of his articles, Father Hamon says: "This date does not

seem certain to me. The Annals of the monastery of Dijon cite a fragment of this letter, and date it as posterior to the time of February, 1689. Last year at Roanne, I found an ancient manuscript in the Visitation convent of Paray which attributes to the same letter the date of October 13, 1687 or 1689, the last cipher being illegible."[1]

This, however, is not the only regrettable defect. The letter is not autographed. At the most it may be considered as the transcription of an original no longer extant. It is asserted that the correspondence that took place between Blessed Margaret Mary and Mother de Saumaise was solicitously guarded in the convent of Dijon up to the time of the French Revolution. During those bloody days it is said to have disappeared; and, up to the present it has not been recovered. This missing epistle has been the occasion of much contention, and the controversy it created has been expressed in unsparing words by those who argued that the *Great Promise* was founded on a document the authenticity of which, in their estimation, is very questionable, and the spuriousness of which would be demonstrable in the near future. The Church took no official part in this discussion; she left the matter unsettled, and, since little hope can be entertained for the recovery of the original manuscript, the problem is likely to remain unsolved indefinitely.

Several plausible arguments have been adduced in favor of the authenticity of the letter, but their insufficiency is evident from the fact that they fail to carry conviction to a considerable number of theologians. Those attacking the authenticity of the letter bring forward numerous objections which, with the proofs and evidences at hand, cannot be satisfcatorily answered. Therefore, one is free to take either side of the controversy. But before expressing an opinion it will be well to canvass the arguments.

[1] HAMON, *Le Texte de la Grande Promesse du Sacré Coeur*, in the *Etudes Religieuses*, vol. XCV, p. 854.

The most important reasons ordinarily adduced in support of the assertion that the letter in question is an authentic copy, in substance corresponding to one actually written by the Beata herself, are as follows.

Father Hamon rendered an inestimable service while championing this cause, when he made a scientific examination of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, and spent much time and energy in an earnest endeavor to clarify some mistaken ideas, and to remove many untenable notions which the opponents of the *Great Promise* have entertained. His criticism is impartial, his premises weighty, and his inferences are generally justifiable . He is, without doubt, well qualified to pronounce judgment in this matter.

To justify their supposition that the letter referred to above was actually written by Blessed Margaret Mary, and forwarded to Mother de Saumaise, the defenders of the *Great Promise* adduce the following reasons.

1. A reference to a letter of such nature is found in the work of Bishop Languet, who published the most important life of Blessed Margaret Mary in 1729.[1] This allusion clearly states the contents of the letter, though not a single one of its words claims to be a quotation. The learned author declares that he had access to all the writings and documents which were calculated to shed light on the life of Blessed Margaret Mary. Therefore, a statement proceeding from such a well-informed pen ought to be considered as conclusive. Father Hamon remarks: "We have heard the unjust and audacious criticism, to which his work gave rise. It seems quite probably, though I have no unmistakable proofs at hand, that the Jansenists and Catholics, opposed to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, spoke

[1] Bishop LANGUET, *op. cit.*, book VII, p. 241.

disparagingly of this divine and incredible promise."[1] Moreover, it cannot be maintained without danger of misrepresentation that Bishop Languet received erroneous information, for up to the year 1789 the manuscript of the Beata was accessible to adversaries and defenders of the *Great Promise.* They could have ascertained and verified with very little effort, the exact words of the Authoress at the Archives of the Visitation convent of Dijon. According to Father Vermeersch, it was this convent in which the writings of the Beata were kept in their original form.[2]

2. Again,. this promise was known to the Community. Father Hamon has ascertained this fact by the following discovery. In the year 1715, when the canonical procedure, preliminary to the beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary was commenced, Sisters Francois-Rosalie Verchère and Péronne-Rosalie de Farges, while collecting the writings of their beloved Mother, were surprised at this letter, and, as he expresses it, "some exceptionally privileged souls without further delay wished to avail themselves of the graces promised by the Sacred Heart."[3]

3. It is scarcely possible that the Visitation nuns would have forwarded to Rome, among other writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, a letter the authenticity of which could be seriously questioned. On the other hand, it is certain that when the cause of her beatification was introduced in the early years of the nineteenth century, a letter of this character was produced by the ecclesiastical officials who were appointed to engage in this cause. It was translated into Italian,

[1] "On connaît les injustes et audacieuses critiques soulevées par son ouvrage; il semble bien probable—je n'en ai pourtant pas de preuve certaine—que les jansénistes et les cathoriques opposés à la dèvotion au Sacré Coeur raillèrent la divine et incroyable promesse" (HAMON, *Etudes Religieuses,* vol. XCV, p. 857).

[2] VERMEERSCH, *Pratique et doctrine de la Dévotion au Sacré Coeur,* tom. II, ch. III, p. 211.

[3] "Quand les soeurs commencèrent à recuillier les écrits de leur maîtresse bien-aimée, on fut frappé par la lettre de 1688. Quelques âmes d'élite voulurent, sans plus tarder, s'assurer les grâces promises par le Sacré Coeur." (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol. XCV, p. 857.)

and Father Thurston adds that "this certain passage was underlined as demanding further investigation at this or later stage of inquiry." [1]

4. Father Hamon believes that as early as 1714 the Devotion of the Nine Fridays was not only known but practiced by some Visitandine Communities. Thus Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, and her subjects began it in Jan. 1714.[2]

5. The Sacred Congregation having carefully examined the writings of the Beata, and having found nothing in their contents to warrant a theological censure,[3] declared in a decree dated on Sept. 22, 1827: *Nihil obstare, et procedi posse ad ulteriora.* Nor did this letter of Blessed Margaret Mary in any way interfere with her beatification, the decree of which was issued on the 28th day of August in the year 1864.

Those who deny that such a letter was written, base their opinion on the following arguments.

1. It must be admitted, they say, that Bishop Languet did have access to the Memoirs of the Beata. However, it can hardly be proved that at that particular juncture all her writings were collected, and placed at his disposal to be made use of as a reference for his bibliography. It is well known that she corresponded with a number of persons who resided at a great distance from Paray, while Bishop Languet seems to be familiar mostly with those letters which were directed mainly to the more prominent persons of the Visitation Community at large.

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[1] THURSTON, *The Nine Fridays,* in *The Month,* vol. CI, p. 637.

[2] "La Mère Louise Henriette de Soudeilles, supérieure du monastère de Moulins, commença le premier vendredi de Janvier 1714, avec toute sa communauté, la série des neuf communions. Elle n'eut pas le temps de l'achever; le 24 avril, elle mourait dans des transports d'amour." (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel,* vol XCV, p. 857.)

[3] Nihil hisce in Scripturis et Epistolis fuisse repertum theologica censura notandum.

2. No mention of the *Great Promise* is found in any other place, letter or writing, with the exception of the letter she was supposed to have sent to Mother de Saumaise. All our knowledge regarding the Devotion of the Nine Fridays is confined solely to the information contained in the letter whose authenticity is questioned.

3. The profuse quotations taken from the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, interspersed in the work of Bishop Languet to portray her character, should be interpreted as an argument rather against than in favor of the defenders of the Twelfth Promise. On page 241, at the bottom of which is the reference in question, two long quotations can be found of which the upper one consists of nineteen lines, and the lower one of eleven lines. After these two citations the Bishop gives an account of the *Great Promise* by alluding to it and interpreting it in his own words. Immediately after this, another quotation follows which is taken from the letter of the Beata directed to Mother Greyfier. Over half of the 384 pages, which form the work of Bishop Languet, is devoted to extracts taken either from the letters of Blessed Margaret Mary, or from the answers she received, or from her autographic Memoir, or finally from writings in which her superiors or her acquaintances expressed their admiration for her virtues and holiness. In addition to the above sources, the *Vie par les Contemporaines,* in which Sisters Péronne-Rosalie de Farges and François-Rosalie Verchère relate the most important incidents of her life, is embodied in his work practically in its entirety, by way of citations. From all this it is patent that he had a keen appreciation of the full value of quotations. To all appearances, whatever authentic and autographic decuments of importance were in his possession, he endeavored to reproduce in the original. He reprints thirteen letters of Blessed Margaret Mary at the end of his work, which she wrote to Mother de Saumaise; but the letter in question is not one of them. Is it not very curious, to say the least, that such a learned and saintly man did not attach

more significance to this letter than merely to state its contents in his own narrative way, when he is so prodigal in quoting her words verbatim in matters of much less consequence?

4. Again, had her writings been opened to public inspection up to the year of 1789, according to Father Vermeersch,[1] or up to 1792, according to Father Hamon,,[2] how are we to explain the silence of those who were so zealous in spreading this devotion, and who ignored no essentail feature that would serve to render it attractive in the eyes of the people? On the other hand, very few men would be inclined to gainsay the fact that if such a reliable account of such a revelation were traceable to the pen of the Beata, this without fail would be considered an essential and preeminently appealing characteristic of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. But as the case stands, Fathers de la Colombière and Rolin make no mention of such a letter. Father Croiset, the first exponent of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. neither in his work of 1691, nor in his two consequent amplified editions, which left the press in 1694 and 1698, makes allusion to such a promise. These three priests knew Blessed Margaret Mary personally, they corresponded with her and were well informed regarding the supernatural visions with which Christ vouchsafed to favor her. No one labored more ardently for the promotion and diffusion of this devotion, no one exerted a greater effort to familiarize himself with all its phases than Father Galliffet, yet, he is evidently ignorant of such a revelation, for he fails to make reference to it either in his work issued in 1726, or in its revised and enlarged edition 1732.

5. Moreover, it is quite inexplicable how a letter of such extreme importance could escape the attention of so many devotees of the Sacred Heart. It was not submitted to print or circulation before 1867, three years after the publication of the Decree of Beatifica-

[1] *Pratique et doctrine de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur,* tom. II, p. 211.
[2] *Le Texte de la Grande Promesse,* in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol XCV. p. 857.

tion. This admission is made candidly even by the staunchest defenders of the *Great Promise*.[1] In the opinion of Father Bachelet the first steps in connection with the publication of the promise were inspired by the new impetus the Devotion to the Sacred Heart received in France about the year of 1870.[2]

The above points summarize most of the weighty arguments adduced respectively by the defenders and the opponents of the Twelfth Promise. They are drawn from various sources, and are calculated to shed some rays of light on the question under consideration. The Church does not come to our assistance with an authoritative pronouncement in this all-important inquiry. After a considerable investigation, Father Hamon remarks regretfully that there is little likelihood of the letter ever being found. And since the arguments fail to carry conviction as regards the authenticity of the letter, we can hardly censure those spiritual writers who qualify the *Great Promise* as doubtful.

The writer, who signs himself SACERDOS, disposes of the question in a very unsatisfactory way in the *American Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. "It is not our intention," he says, "to treat of the authenticity of the promise. We may say, however, that it would be very risky to call this authenticity in question, since it is found in the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary which have passed the

[1] THURSTON, *loc. cit.*, vol. CI, p. 636 foot-note.

[2] "Dans les plus anciens manuels de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, on trouve onze promesses sous la forme concise qu'elles ont guardée et dans l'ordre même où nous les plaçons encore. Longtemps, dans la plupart des feuilles, on n'en imprima pas d'autres. Ce ne fut que vers 1870, quand la dévotion au Sacré Coeur reçut en France une nouvelle impulsion, qu'une douzième fut ajoutée." (BACHELET, *La Grande Promesse du Sacré Coeur, Etudes Rel.*, vol. LXXXVIII, p. 385).

scrutiny of the Roman Congregation."[1] No comment needs to be passed on this remark. The difficulty to be confronted is of a more serious nature than the writer of the above cited article anticipated. The *Promoter Fidei,* A. M. Frattini, did not at all concern himself about the authenticity of the letter, he only wished to point out the untenableness of the belief that a revelation concerning the gift of final perseverance was likely to have been communicated to Blessed Margaret Mary. However, we shall have occasion to recur to this point later.

[1] *Ground of Hope, The American Messenger of the Sacred Heart* 1898, p. 156.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTENTS OF THE LETTER CONTAINING THE GREAT PROMISE.

The purpose of this chapter will be to ascertain the contents of the letter whose authenticity has been considered in the foregoing pages. This step is necessary in order to form a clear idea as to the sense its wording conveys.

An insurmountable difficulty confronts us at the very outset. It is that involved in the determination of the form of the Twelfth Promise that is to be accepted as the revealed one. There are no less than four different formulas from which we may make a selection. The writer referred to above [1] states that "in the authentic life of Blessed Margaret Mary the promise occurs in two places." Then he gives the two forms in French, translates the first one into English and subjoins: "Unfortunately we have no means of finding out what Blessed Margaret Mary understood by the promise. She speaks of it in no other place, it seems, besides the two passages which we have given above, and in neither of them does she say anything about its meaning." The description is very realistic, but just as misleading. It is true that there are two distinct passages in *"Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie"* in which reference is made to the *Great Promise*. This work was edited by the Visitandines and consists of two volumes. The first volume containing her life written by *Les Contemporaines,* gives the text by way of citation. In the second volume, which contains her own writings, the letter itself, directed to Mother de Saumaise, is

[1] SACERDOS, *Ground of Hope, Am. Mess. of the S. H.,* 1898, p. 156.

given in full. The writer of the above article, therefore, has an erroneous idea which will permit a correction. His interpretation would unfailingly convey the notion that the autobiography of Blessed Margaret Mary refers to the Twelfth Promise in two distinct places. Such a statement cannot be sustained, for it is not Blessed Margaret Mary herself that speaks. It is the *Contemporaines* Visitandines that quote her doubtful letter in the first volume, and the Visitandines of 1867 and 1876 respectively publish the same from a copied, transcribed source in the second volume. It is questionable whether even the *Contemporaines* Visitandines had the autograph in their possession since it was only a copy and not the original letter that they submitted to the Sacred Congregation. This latter statement is corroborated indirectly by the third and only authentic edition of her works that appeared in 1915 through the solicitude of Archbishop Gauthey.

Since there is no other criterion to enable us to form a correct estimate of the relative value of the subsequent remarks, in order to judge their merit intelligently, it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the works of Blessed Margaret Mary. The investigation will involve a somewhat complicate question without the understanding of which it is impossible to pass a judgment on the subject under consideration.

Blessed Margaret Mary by order of Mother de Saumaise, her Superior in the convent, and her confessors, Fathers de la Colombière and Rolin, wrote a Memoir in which she relates the principal events of her life. Mgr. Bougaud [1] says that the first edition of this manuscript of the Beata was published by Father Galliffet, who brought it out in conjunction with his treatise *"Sur l'Excellence de la Dévotion au Coeur de Jèsus-Christ."* In 1865 the same manuscript was reedited by Bather Daniel. Blessed Margaret

[1] *Histoire de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie,* ch. I, p. 35, foote-note.

Mary corresponded with persons both religious and lay. Her autobiography in the original is still extant, and also many of her autographic letters. Some of her letters were lost entirely, others again are preserved only in a transcribed form. In the year 1715 a movement commenced with episcopal approbation to collect juridicial data preliminary to her beatification. On this occasion Srs. Péronne-Rosalie de Farges, and François-Rosalie Verchère composed a Memoir under the title of *Vie de la Bienheureuse par les Contemporaines* in which they give us an insight into her convent life. This manuscript was one of the sources from which Bishop Languet drew his information for the life of Blessed Margaret Mary.[1] After his work was finished he returned it to the Archives of Paray. The Visitandines undertook to combine this latter work with the Memoir of the Beata, and in 1867 published in two volumes a work entitled *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite Marie.* Thus the above work is a combination of two distinct compilations of manuscript Memoirs. The first volume confines itself to the *Vie de la Bienheureuse par les Contemporaines,* while the second contains the *Memoire écrit par la Bienheureuse, sur l'ordre du Père Rolin, son directeur.* In 1876 the Visitandines gave a second amplified and revised edition of the same work again in two volumes. Father Hamon expresses his disapproval of the various changes and additions introduced into this latter edition. The third and the only reliable edition of all the documents appertaining to Blessed Margaret Mary was committed to print in 1915 of which we shall speak more extensivel later.

Through this short survey of the scope, nature and history of the above work one is better qualified to appreciate the arguments of the opponents of the Twelfth Promise as well as those of its defenders. If—as Father Hamon says—the two Sisters who were collecting her writings were astonished to find such a letter among them why does

[1] Languet, *op. cit., Discours,* p. 52.

not Father Galliffet, who was the first to publish her Memoir, make at least a passing reference to it? Again, if the Visitandines possessed such a treasure in its authentic form, why did they hesitate for such a long time before they placed its contents before the public? Father Thurston's investigation proves that the *Great Promise* was not put in print before 1867.[1]

On the other hand it is hard to reconcile with the foregoing statements Bishop Languet's reference to such a letter. From this it would seem that the Visitandines who compiled the *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse* and gave it to him to be used as a source for his work, either possessed a letter of such character, or, at least, made a deposition that such a letter had actually been written. Had he been in possession of an autographic document he would surely have quoted it, for, as it has already been observed, he cited many others of considerably less importance. Nor can it be said that he did not attach enough weight to it to convey its contents with the exact words of the Beata. A letter indeed might have been placed before him, but—because it was only a transcription of the one said to have been written by the Beata—this reason might have induced him to refrain from quoting it. There are many incidents related in his work, and connected with the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, which he draws solely from the authority of eye-witnesses whose testimony he judges to have been reliable. Could it not be supposed that he received his information *viva voce,* and, placing an implicit confidence in the trustworthiness and reliability of his informants, accepted it as a fact?

Be that as it may, no one claims to quote the text of the Twelfth Promise according to a prototype manuscript. Even Father Hamon, who made a thorough scrutiny of her writings, and familiarized himself with all the documents the Visitation Nuns possess bearing

[1] Thurston, in the *Month, The Nine Fridays,* vol. CI, p. 636.

on this subject, does not draw its wording from such a manuscript, though fully cognizant of the fact that it would corroborate his position considerably. The supposition that up to the French revolution her writings were accessible to the public does not help to solve the difficulty. How is one to infer which writings were preserved in autographic exemplars up to that time? On July 22nd in 1715, only 58 autographic and 39 copied letters were produced for the process of beatification. This collection of autographs contained 18 letters to Mother de Soudeilles, four letters to Mother de Buisson, 14 letters to Sr. Felice Madelaine (de la Barge), 10 to the Sisters de Monruant, Ursulines at Paray, and 12 to her brother Chrysostom Alacoque. Among the copies, at this rate, are to be computed the 27 transcribed letters to Mother de Saumaise, one to Sr. Joly, and 11 fragments preserved in the Memoir of Mother Greyfier. Of all these 58 autographs 10 were lost, but the 39 copied letters were all preserved. Therefore, it would appear from the most authentic account [1] that of the 27 letters written by Blessed Margaret Mary to Mother de Saumaise, and presented for the process of beatification on July 22, 1715, not a single one was an autograph of the Beata. It is true that some of her autographic letters were discovered since that time, but the letter which concerns us most is not one of them, and even at present we possess only three autographs of the 48 letters which she was supposed to have written to the Superior of Dijon, Mother de Saumaise. Two of these autographs are preserved at the convent of Nevers and one at Rennes.

If only a reproduction or transcription of this important letter was presented to the Sacred Congregation in the year 1715, then the autograph, to all likelihood, must have been lost long before the French revolution. This might explain the attitude of Bishop Lan-

[1] *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque,* publication du monastère de la visitation de Paray-Le-Monial, *par les soins de Monseigneur* GAUTHEY, *Archévêque de Besançon,* Paris, 1915, tom. II, pp. 207-215.

guet who prefers rather to narrate its contents than quote it verbatim. What was it that brought about the destruction of this letter, what circumstances occasioned its disappearance, who can testify to having read it in the original copy, remain questions difficult of satisfactory solution.

We shall now proceed to compare the different formulas of the letter under investigation. The first volume of the 1867 and 1876 Visitandine editions gives one rendition of the promise,[1] and the second volume of the same two editions gives another form.[2]

The two renditions are at variance in ten different points, though the meaning they convey is substantially the same. The fact that the Visitandines attach equal value to both these forms, for they publish both in the same work without any discrimination, shows that they themselves entertained a doubt as to its exact wording. Nor do they intend to accept the form handed down by *Les Contemporaines* of 1715, as the only authentic one.

The third form of the promise is found in the work of Bishop

[1] "Je te promets, dans l'excès de la miséricorde de mon Coeur, que son amour tout-puissant accordera à tous ceux qui communieront les premiers vendredis, neuf mois de suite, la grâce de la pénitence finale, qu'ils ne mourront point dans ma disgrâce, ni sans recevoir leur sacrements, et qu'il se rendra leur asile assuré à cette heure dernière." (*Vie et Oeuv.* ed. 1867, vol. I, p. 291; again, ed. 1876, vol. I, p. 318.)

[2] "Je te promets dans l'excessive miséricorde de mon Coeur, que son amour tout puissant accordera à tous ceux qui communieront neuf premiers vendredis du mois, tout de suite, la grâce finale de la pénitence; qu'ils ne mourront point en sa disgrâce ni sans recevoir les sacrements, mon divin Coeur se rendant leur asile assuré en ce dernier moment." (*Vie et Oeuvres*, vol. II, ed. 1867, p. 159; again, ed. 1876, vol. II, p. 196).

Languet.[1] This is not a quotation of the original promise, but only an interpretation of it given by the author. However, in substance it agrees with the foregoing. It prescribes the performance of the same number and nature of spiritual exercises. It specifies the same time, at which they are to take place, but the reward is not to be expected with the same absolute assurance, as expressed by the above two forms. For after one has complied with the required conditions he *may entertain a hope of receiving the sacraments of the Church and the grace of final repentance before dying.*[2]

The fourth version of the Twelfth Promise is found in a manuscript discovered by Father Hamon in 1902 in the library of Joseph Déchelette. This form, in his estimation, is the nearest approach to the original. However, he fears that in his decision he might have been unconsciously actuated by the self-love of a fortunate investigator.[3] The difference between this and the one taken from the first volume of the *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie*, ed. 1867, p. 291, is insignificant. Still, for the sake of comparison

[1] "Dans une autre Lettre elle prescrit une pratique pour honorer le Coeur de Jesus-Christ; pratique qui lui étoit familiere, et que notre Seigneur lui avoit suggerée, en lui faisant esperer la grace de la pénitence finale, et celle de recevoir les Sacramens de l'Eglise avant que de mourir, pour ceux qui l'observeroient. C'étoit de faire une neuvaine de Communion à cette intention et pour honorer le Coeur de Jesus-Christ; en plaçant chacune de ces Communions à chaque premier vendredi du mois, pendant neuf mois de suite." (*La Vie de la Venerable Mère Marguerite-Marie*, Paris, 1729, books VII, pp. 241-242).

[2] "En lui faisant esperer la grâce de la pénitence finale et celle de recevoir les sacremens de l'Eglise avant que de mourir."

[3] "Elle me paraît, de toutes celles que je connais, la plus voisine de l'autographe. Toutefois, il pourrait se glisser dans mon appréciation un peu de l'égoïsme inconscient du chercheur heureux." (Hamon, *Etudes Rel., La Grande Promesse du Sacré Coeur*, vol. XCV, p. 855.)

it will be advisable to reproduce it in its entirety.[1]

The same author refers to a fifth version which he does not quote, but claims that in a fragmentary form it can be verified in the *Annales du Monastère de Dijon.*[2]

This will suffice as to the different versions of the Twelfth Promise. From their comparison it is manifest that they are not altogether uniform, nor do they differ substantially. They all promise the grace of final repentance and the last Sacraments. An important distinction, however, is not to be lost sight of. While three of the forms give an absolute assurance of the above reward, Bishop Languet's formula premises it with the words: *En lui faisant esperer* which may be rendered into English: *And leading her to hope,* i. e., for the above graces.

It is hardly possible to determine which of these forms, if any, is identical with the original. The investigation of Father Hamon makes the matter only more complicated and the solution of the difficulty more hopeless. He points out[3] that the *Vie de la Bienheureuse par les Contemporaines* on which Bishop Languet founded most of his statements and from which he quoted many of her letters is full of citations not corresponding faithfully to the original autographic writings of the Beata. Hence he infers logically that Bishop Languet's life is not reliable in all its particulars. He pronounces

[1] "Et un jour de vendredi, pendant la sainte communion, il fut dit ces paroles à son indigne esclave, si elle ne se trompe: Je te promets, dans l'excessive miséricorde de mon Coeur, que son amour tout-puissant accordera à tous ceux qui communieront neuf premiers vendredis des mois de suite la grâce de la pénitence finale, ne mourront point en sa disgrâce, ni sans recevoir leurs sacrements (,) se rendant leur asile assuré en ce dernier moment." (Hamon, in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol XCV, p. 856.)

[2] In the *Etudes Rel.,* vol. XCV, p. 854 note.

[3] In the *Etudes Rel., Les Vies de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque,* vol. XCI, p. 720 sq.

the same criticism on the works of Father Croiset.[1] He admits that the works of Fathers Daniel and Bougaud were composed according to the modern methods of hagiography but does not refrain from pointing out a number of inexact quotations in them.[2] Yet, all these writers claim to have consulted the original documents. The explanation for all this can be found in the subsequent statements of the Visitandines. They admit that many modifications were introduced in the edition of the *Vie par les Contemporaines*.[3] Thus they have interpolated certain documents whose addition they considered necessary to complete the work. In this connection we can sympathize with Father Hamon, who, after having perused these introduced changes, censures them for their action and disapprovingly remarks that they ask too much indulgence when they attempt to characterize these alterations by the appellation *quelques améliorations de style*.[4]

Yet, these interpolated documents were consulted by all the authors who wrote on the question which we are considering. Father Hamon passes an unfavorable judgment also on the Memoir as edited by Father Galliffet. He contends that in spite of the fact that five Sisters of Paray confirmed it by their signature,

[1] "Le Père Croiset et Mgr Languet ne se montrent pas suffisamment historiens; il veulent surtout édifier." (*Loc. cit.*, pp. 723 and 724.)

[2] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 729 ff.

[3] "Quant aux documents fournis par les Mères Greyfié et de Saumaise, les Contemporaines en avaient omis quelques fragments, pour des raisons qui n'existent aujourd'hui. Nous les avons intercalés à leur place pour que l'oeuvre fût entière. Nous avons de même intercalé en leur lieu de précieux fragments trouvés dans nos archives, et appartenant à l'époque des Contemporaines." (*Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie*, vol. I, p. 21).

[4] "A mon humble avis il eut mieux valu publier le texte sans y rien modifier, et mettre corrections et changements en note. C'est toutefois montrer beaucoup d'indulgences que de les appeler "quelques améliorations de style." (HAMON, *loc. cit.*, vol. XCI, p. 732, foot-note.)

notwithstanding the title page bearing the words *Copie fidèle,* the edition contains many inexcusable errors.[1]

From the foregoing statements one would be inclined to think that in the course of our infestigation we have strayed into a labyrinth without having a clue to find our way out. No authors up to the present have been exact in their quotations taken either from the Memoir of the Beata, or the *Vie et Oeuvres par les Contemporaines.* Even the official edition of the Visitandines printed in 1867 and 1876, cannot be trusted in every particular on account of the additions of certain supplements which, as they say, were taken from ancient manuscripts copied from the original, and preserved either at the Visitation convent of Paray, or at the hospital of the same village, or in other religious houses, the autographs having disappeared.[2] Father Hamon may, therefore, legitimately draw the inference that in the second volume of the *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie* which contains her letters and Memoirs only those writings are to be considered authentic of which the autograph is extant.[3]

The regrettable fact that such liberty was taken with the works of Blessed Margaret Mary tends to confirm the opinion entertained by some that the text of the letter in question cannot be trusted. If even the two Visitandines who composed her *first* life by using her own writings, cannot be believed; if they eliminated certain expressions and supplanted them with others; if neither the text of Fathers Croiset, Languet, Galliffet, Daniel and Bougaud can be trust-

[1] HAMON, *loc. cit.*, p. 731, foot-note.

[2] "Un certain nombre de lettres et d'avis sont *"tirés d' anciens manuscrits copiés sur les originaux et conservés soit à la Visitation de Paray, soit à l'hospice de la même ville, soit en d'autres maisons religieuses"* les autographes ont disparu." (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol. XCI, pp. 733-734).

[3] "Dans ce volume même, on ne doit pourtant considérer comme, entièrement authentiques que les seuls écrits dont nous possédons encore les autographes." (HAMON, *loc. cit.*, p. 742).

ed, for they have all alike taken liberties when they quoted the Beata, can we for a moment imagine that the wording of the letter containing the Twelfth Promise remained intact? Father Hamon admits that the letter as cited is not the composition of the Beata word for word, but assures us that *to the best of his knowledge no essential idea or clear fact underwent a modification in it, nor was there added anything to the primitive text.* Communion for nine First Fridays of the month, the grace of final repentance, not dying without the reception of their Sacraments, practices so definite and a promise so solemn cannot be interpolations.[1]

Another serious objection which the defenders of the *Great Promise* find very hard to answer satisfactorily is the fact that it was not published till 1867, according to Father Thurston,[2] or till 1870 according to Father Bachelet.[3] Up to that time all leaflets contained only eleven promises in the order in which they are placed nowadays. The Twelfth Promise was added around the year when the Devotion to the Sacred Heart received a new impetus in France.[4]

Nor are the Visitandines in possession of a record to prove that any persons practised it, with the possible exception mentioned by Father Hamon. He states a fact for which he fails to give his authority. On the first Friday of Jan. 1714, Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, with her whole community, engaged in making the

[1] "Quand on transcrivit les écrits de la Bienheureuse, souvent on les abrégea pour des raisons que je n'ai pas à donner ici, souvent on les corrigea pour supprimer des fautes de français, qui n'en étaient, pas toujours, ou les accommoder au goût des délicats, qui n'était pas toujours le bon goût; jamais, au moins à ma connaissance, on n'a modifié ni une idée essentielle, ni un fait bient net; jamais on n'a rien ajouté au texte primitif. Communion des neuf premiers vendredis du mois; grâce finale de la pénitence; mourir sans recevoir leur sacraments, des pratiques si précises, une aussi solennelle promesse, ne peuvent être des interpolations." (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.*, vol. XCV, p. 855).

[2] THURSTON, *The Month, The Nine Fridays,* vol. CI, p. 636, foot-note.

[3] *Etudes Rel.*, vol. LXXXVIII, p. 386.

[4] "Dans les plus anciens manuels de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, on trouve onze promesses sous la forme concise qu'elles ont guardée et dans l'ordre même où nous les plaçons encore. Longtemps, dans la plupart des feuilles, on n'en imprima pas d'autres. Ce ne fut que vers 1870, quand la dévotion au Sacré Coeur reçut en France une nouvelle impulsion, qu'une douzième fut ajoutée." (BACHELET, *Etudes Rel.*, vol. LXXXVIII, pp. 385-386).

nine Fridays but did not complete them, having passed away on the 24th of April of the same year.[1]

Again the same author says that when the two Sisters, Françoise-Rosalie Verchère and Péronne Rosalie de Farges, commenced the collection of the writings of the Beata for the canonical procedure of her beatification, they were surprised to find such a promise. As it has already been pointed out they submitted only a transcription of the supposed original letter to the Sacred Congregation. Hence, it may be concluded with safety that the autograph was not accessible to them. Furthermore, they were the best friends of the Beata, and yet knew nothing of the promise, for in case of the contrary supposition their surprise would be entirely out of place. Therefore, since Blessed Margaret died in 1690, for 34 years nobody knew anything about the promise except Mother de Saumaise, provided it be admitted that the letter was actually written to her, and the community of Moulins, presupposing that Father Hamon drew his information from a reliable source. Yet the revelation narrated in this letter was of such character that the pious Superior of Dijon could hardly have refrained from publishing it among the different Communities especially after she herself had become a sincere devotee of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Is it not strange that she should ignore the contents of the letter of which she was the recipient, and the Community at Moulins, of which Mother de Soudeilles was the Superior, should put it in practice for the first time?

Again, it is well known that Blessed Margaret Mary in her zealous endeavor to win her companions as well as persons living in the world to the Devotion of the Sacred Heart, used every legitimate means to accomplish her design. Yet, her writings do not contain a single exhortation to practise the nine Fridays. It would seem that

[1] "La Mère Louise-Henriettee de Soudeilles, commença le premier vendredi de janvier 1714, avec toute so communauté, la série des neuf communions. Elle n'eut pas le temps de l'achever: le 24 avril elle mourrait dans des transports d'amour." (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.*, vol. XCV, p. 857).

the holy religious did not attach a particular importanc to the *Great Promise,* or did not consider it apart from the other manifestations concerning the First Fridays on which Christ was asking a special reparation. We find her exhorting her followers to a special worship of the Sacred Heart on First Fridays, Confession and Holy Communion being insisted upon in particular.[1] Even Father Thurston admits that "Blessed Margaret Mary does not appear to have attached any exceptional significance or importance" to this singular revelation.[2]

It goes without saying that after the *Great Promise* has once been printed, and diffused among the different nations of the world in their several vernaculars, it enjoyed a considerable popularity. There is nothing that men of Christian faith dread more than the uncertainty of salvation. This tormenting doubt they considered settled with moral certainty when the text of the Twelfth Promise came to their notice. What is more, ecclesiastics of note were not wanting who confirmed their opinion even from the pulpit. Nothing more natural, therefore, than to embrace such a devotion. We shall have occasion to speak on this point more fully in the following chapter.

[1] *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1867, vol. II, pp. 90, 132, 237, etc.
[2] THURSTON, in the *Month,* vol., CI, p. 627.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT OF THE GREAT PROMISE.

The *Great Promise,* as it has already been pointed out, is couched in different forms. Since the purpose of this chapter is to submit it to interpretation we shall be obliged to select one of its versions.

The formula of Bishop Languet not being a quotation has never been taken as a model for such. The other three renditions of the Twelfth Promise have equal value. For the time being we shall give preference to the text which is found in the second volume of *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie* published by the Visitandines of Paray in 1876, p. 196. It runs thus: *One day on a Friday, during Holy Comunion He said these words to His unworthy slave* (servant), *if she be not mistaken: I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of my Heart, that Its all powerful love will give the grace of final repentance to all those who communicate nine successive First Fridays of the month; they will not die in Its displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments, My divine Heart rendering Itself their assured refuge in that last moment.*[1] The first difficulty presenting itself is the expression of doubt: *Si elle ne se trompe* (If she be not mistaken). A passage found in the Memoir of Mother Greyffié sheds a sufficient light on this point to explain it

[1] Un jour de vendredi, pendant la sainte Communion, il dit ces paroles, à son indigne esclave, si elle ne se trompe: Je te promets, dans l'excessive miséricorde de mon Coeur, que son amour tout-puissant accordera à tous ceux qui communieront neuf premiers vendredis du mois, tout de suite, la grâce finale de la pénitence; ils ne mourront point en sa disgrâce, ni sans recevoir leur sacrements, mon divin Coeur se rendant leur asile assuré en ce dernier moment."

satisfactorily. This Superior advises the Beata that in connection with her supernatural visions, for the sake of humility, she should make frequent use of terms expressive of doubt as, e. g., *It seems to me,* or *If I am not mistaken.* It can be presumed that Blessed Margaret Mary in this particular instance acted in conformity with the above suggestion. She was, furthermore, instructed even to disclaim the revelation in case her Superiors, or those who have a right to investigate it, pronounce against it.[1] A perusal of her writings will disclose that she used the above expression with frequency. In this connection it will be well to note a very appropriate remark of Father Thurston: "We do not invariably find this note of doubt in the saint's description of her supernatural experiences, especially when we are dealing with her autograph."[2] Moreover, the advice of Mother Greyfié also complicates matters to some extent. It is conceded that the saints did not always comprehend all their supernatural visions with clarity. Hence, in case they wished to commit them to writing, unless convinced of their real signification, they couched them in words expressing an ambiguity. But as it is, we are at a loss to determine now whether Blessed Margaret Mary premises the dubitative terms in obedience to Mother Greyfié's counsel, or because she failed to have a perspicuous comprehension of the full scope and meaning of the revelation.

2. It is clear that in order to gain the reward of the *Great Promise* Holy Communion must be received the First Friday of every month, for a period of nine consecutive months. No warrant can be found in the writings of the Beata justfying the supposition of some spirit-

[1] "Je lui disais pourtant de ne point parler des grâces extraordinaires qu'elle recevait qu'en termes douteux, comme, il me semble, ou, si je ne me trompe, et de ne s'y point fier avec tant de fermeté qu'elle ne fût prête a s'en départir, sous le jugement des personnes qui lui seraient supérieures ou qui auraient droit d'en faire l'examen. Elle m'a paru toujours très fidèle à cet avis." (*Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 175).

[2] THURSTON, in the *Month,* vol. CI, p. 637.

ual writers that in case one of the Fridays happens to be Good Friday it will suffice to prolong the devotion by one month. It is only a modern, private conjectural interpretation on which the Church, up to the present, has failed to take a definite official stand. Therefore, the devotional manuals are to be reprehended when, without an adequate warrant, they state with certainty that the intervening Good Friday does not break the chain of the requisite nine First Friday Communions.[1] Until an official pronouncement is made on this matter we cannot urge strongly enough the acceptance of the interpretation that in case the succession of the First Fridays has been interrupted, even by circumstances over which the communicant had no control, the devotion must be recommenced.

3. There are two things to be noted in connection with the reward which is to accrue to the communicant from the reception of the nine Holy Communions, viz., (1) *la grâce de la pénitence finale;* (2) *les Sacrements.* In one version we read *la grâce finale de la pénitence,* and in another *la grâce de la pénitence finale.* Since it is evident that these two references to this particular grace intend to convey the same meaning it may justly be concluded that all the forms of the *Great Promise* concur in assuring the grace of final repentance. To the word *pénitence* the meaning of repentance was attached in the time of Blessed Margaret Mary. The qualifying adjective *finale* specifies the time at which this special grace is to be expected. The deathbed repentance in French is *la pénitence au lit de la mort.* Father de la Colombière in his sermon entitled *Sur la pénitence differée à la mort* gives an excellent example of the use of the French word

[1] *Catéchisme de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, par un prêtre Oblat de Marie Immaculée,* Paris, 1902, p. 257. Again, *Trésor Spirituel de la Dévotion au Sacré Coeur de Jésus, Chapelain de Montmartre,* vol. I, p. 218.

la pénitence. The interpreters lay great stress on this part of the reward, the sacraments not being absolutely necessary, since Christ, if He so desire, can render a soul with such a special grace a pleasing object in His sight irrespective of whether it had previously received the last sacraments or not. Therefore, since the grace of final repentance irrevocably decides the fate of the soul which *hic et nunc* is on the verge of embarking for eternity, the signification of the promise will resolve itself principally into the interpretation attributed to the first reward.

Ecclesiastics, conversant with the various phases of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, suggest three leading interpretations to be attributed to this grace. We shall present a brief treatment of each opinion individually.

A. Father Ramière, for a long time the official head of the League of the Sacred Heart, represents no small circle of followers. In his estimation Christ promises a guarantee of only a little more than the ordinary help at the hour of death to the compliant with the prescribed conditions. He affords us reasonable grounds of expectation that He will be with the dying in a special manner at that momentous hour upon which his eternity depends. He extends the hope of a particular grace, but gives no assurance concerning the cooperation with it. He promises also to give a special opportunity of receiving the sacraments one may stand in need of. Summarizing all the foregoing: "He holds out the certainty of extraordinary favors at the hour of death but gives no certainty of final repent-

[1] *Ground of Hope, American Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, year 1898, p. 157.

ance."[1]

B. Father Bachelet interprets it somewhat differently. In his belief it ought to be analogous to the Scapular Promise. Père Theophile Raynaud[2] states that the promises attached to the Scapular will be verified infallibly provided the wearer complies with two kinds of conditions, viz., the common and the particular conditions. The former comprise the observances prescribed for the faithful in general, while the latter are limited to those required of the members of the Confraternity in particular. Basing his opinion on this explanation, Father Bachelet avers that one may expect the realization of the *Great Promise* only after having complied with the requirements of the ordinary means of salvation as well as with those of the Nine Fridays' Devotion. In his estimation the Twelfth Promise has no more force than the words of the Sacred Scripture, viz., "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life;"[3] or, "he that eateth (that bread), and drinketh (the blood) unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself;"[4] or again, "for we are saved by hope;"[5] or, finally "for alms delivereth from death and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."[6]

Just as only one healthy organ does not spell the general health of the body, so one of these means taken separately cannot be the whole cause of salvation. These conditions are to be viewed in the light that each of them individually is a partial contributor towards our last end, and collectively would actually bring it about. The same

[1] Sacerdos, *Amer. Mess. of the Sacred Heart*, year 1898, p. 157.
[2] *Summa Aurea*, vol. V, col. 502.
[3] *John* VI, 55.
[4] I. *Cor.* XI, 29.
[5] *Rom.* VIII, 24.
[6] *Tobias*, XII. 9.

opinion is advocated by Bellarmine.[1] Father Bachelet justifies his interpretation by the words of Benedict XIV concerning the efficacy of the Scapular Promise. No person will escape eternal punishment by the mere fact that he wears the Scapular, if during his life he was guilty of sinful excesses. No person will be saved by the mere fact that he wears a Scapular without having performed other meritorious works to deserve such a reward. Eternal salvation presupposes good acts and perseverance in such acts.[2] That such was the belief Blessed Simon himself entertained is evident from his own words: "My Brethren, endeavor to assure your salvation by the performance of good works.'[3]

C. Father Vermeersch is the staunchest advocate of a third mode of interpretation. According to his judgment no analogy can be established between the reward which the Sacred Scripture attaches to various acts individually, and the reward guaranteed by the *Great Promise*. The Sacred Scripture, he argues, reveals to us the ordinary economy of salvation. It is to be considered as a composite consisting of different parts of which each contributes its share towards the integration of the whole. Hence, one passage helps to explain the others. Therefore, a special recommendation of a certain

[1] "Saepenumero scriptura divina tribuit vim justificandi, aut etiam salvandi, diversis rebus. . . . neque tamen ullus est, qui inde colligat, solum timorem, aut solam spem, aut solam ellemosynam, aut solum verbum sine fide et dilectione, aliisque ad eundem finem requisitis, sufficere posse ad salutem. Sic igitur etiamsi detestationi peccatorum et orationi alicubi Scriptura iustificationem tribueret; non tamen colligere opporteret, sola illa sufficere, sed illa quidem vim suam habere et plane iustificare si cetera non desint." (Bellarmine, *Opera Omnia,* tom. III, tract *de Poenitentia,* lib. II, c. VII, p. 644).

[2] "Aussi, dit Benoit XIV, dans la révélation du Bienheureux Simon, on ne lit pas que celui qui a porté le scapulaire sera par cela même, et par cela seul, preservé du feu éternel, sans qu'il ait jamais fait autre chose. Il faut de bonnes oeuvres, pour le salut éternel, et il faut la persévérance dans le bien." (Bachelet, *Etudes Rel.,* vol. LXXXVIII, p. 390).

[3] "Mes fréres, dit saint Simon Stock avec l'apôtre saint Paul, efforcez-vous d'assurer votre vocation par la pratique des bonnes oeuvres." (Serapion a S. Andrea, *Scapulierbüchlein der Karmeliterbruderschaft,* Graz., 1869; ibid., Bachelet, vol. LXXXVIII, p. 390, and Beringer, p. 197).

good disposition or meritorious work means nothing more than to emphasize the particular place which these hold in conjunction with the other acts, but does not point out a new merit possessed by them separately. Such passages are related to others with which they form a harmonious whole, and depend on them for their full signification. But in the case of the Twelfth Promise no such interpretation can be advocated without doing violence to the text. The *Great Promise* is complete in itself, not dependent on, or correlated to any other, therefore, in interpreting it we must take the full scope and range of its contents unrestrictedly.

Furthermore, Christ in the Sacred Scripture promises life everlasting to those who eat His flesh and drink His blood. However, He does not specify the frequency of this participation in his flesh and blood. It is to endure throughout the whole life, and according to the practice prescribed by the discipline of the Church. Parallel is the case as regards the grace attached to the Scapular. One must be invested with it at the hour of death. This presupposes a kind of negative perseverance till the last moment of our terrestrial sojourn when the designated favor is to be bestowed. But the *Great Promise* is not conditioned by, or subordinated to a practice of indefinite duration, for the indicated conditions could have been satisfied long before death overtakes us. It is particularly in this feature Father Vermeersch places the excellence of the Nine Fridays' Devotion.[1]

He argues further that the grace of God can surely triumph over the weaknesses as well as over the obstinacy of man. It is undoubtedly capable of preventing presumption and hardening in sin.

[1] "La promesse de Notre Seigneur n'est subordonnée à aucune pratique de durée indéfinie. Longtemps même avant la mort, il peut être pleinement satisfait à toutes les conditions. Voilà ce qui fait la spécialité et l'excellence de la Grande Promesse" (Vermeersch, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. II, p. 225).

Without His grace man is unable to presevere in justice, and He can give anyone a sufficient grace which He foresees will eventually be efficacious. He may lay down certain condition for its acquisition, or may bring about the same result absolutely, i. e., without any conditions whatsoever. In the present case God will not bestow this grace unless certain conditions are verified beforehand. Since, however, according to the general rule of interpretation, the literal sense is to be preferred, unless something obviously militates against it, therefore, he concludes, all those who fulfill the prescribed conditions are morally certain of their salvation.[1]

The disposition with which these Holy Communions should be received is (1) the state of grace, (2) the intention of not neglecting one's spiritual obligations in the future, (3) in honor of the Sacred Heart as a reparation to make amends for the ingratitude of men, (4) special intention of gaining the grace offered by the Twelfth Promise. Father Vermeersch rejects the opinion of Father Smith who claims that a high degree of fervor must be manifested in the reception of these nine Holy Communions in order that the promised grace may be granted. Bainvel clings to the opinion of Father Vermeersch by claiming that the promise is absolute, and presupposes as a condition only the worthy reception of the nine Holy Communions at the time specified. It promises final perseverance, he says, purporting the penitence and the last Sacraments, but only in the degree necessary.[2]

[1] "Ceux qui communieront neuf premiers vendredis de suite avec des dispositions voulues auront tous la grâce de la persévérance finale. Et, par conséquent, les fidèles qui, de bon coeur, s'efforcent de réaliser cette condition sont moralement assurés de leur salut." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. II, p. 226).

[2] "Ce qui est promis, ce n'est pas la persévérance dans le bien pendant tout la vie: ce n'est pas non plus la réception des derniers sacrements en toute hypothèse, c'est la persévérance finale, emportant la pénitence et les derniers sacrements dans la mesure nécessaire. Ceux-là ne comprennent rien à la dévotion de l'amour, que ces grandes promesses scandalisent, ou qui n'y voient qu'un encouragement à mal faire." (*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, art. *Coeur Sacré de Jésus* (*Dévotion au*), col. 332).

The advocates of the third mode of interpretation, therefore, maintain that if we stand by the plain and obvious meaning of the language none of those who make the Nine Fridays duly are to be excluded from the moral certainty of a happy death. In their estimation the grace of final perseverance spoken of in the *Great Promise* is an efficacious grace, and it will infallibly obtain the consent of the will.[1]

But what is to be said about those who presume that their salvation is secure irrespective of the kind of life they lead in the future, provided they have made the Nine Fridays. We are to distinguish whether this presumption on their part, arose before they engaged in the devotion or after they terminated it. No provision is made for those in whose case this presumption arises concomitantly with the devotion. In the first case they would lack the necessary disposition, and consequently, have no right to the promised reward. As to the second case, the interpretations disagree. Father Bachelet believes that those who by a consequent presumption become hardened in the state of sin, by this very act place an impediment in the way of the realization of the *Great Promise*. Even those who by mere human weakness, without any presumption on their part, transgress the commandments of God, by this very fact lose their assured title to this special divine assistance. However, we should not hesitate to state, he says, if not absolutely at least as something plausible and especially to be hoped for, that the Heart of Jesus will remember in opportune time the right these sinful souls acquired by the performance of the Nine Fridays' Devotion, and causing the obstacle to

[1] Sacerdos, *American Mess. of the Sacred Heart, loc. cit.*, year 1898, p. 158.

disappear, He will simultaneously revive the right which is suspended in some way on account of their state of sin.[1]

Father Vermeersch treats with the same severity those souls whose presumption arose before they engaged in the devotion. But after they have once performed it with the necessary disposition and good intention they may entertain a moral certitude as to their salvation. God by this special grace will safeguard them from falling into presumption, he maintains, or, at least, from persevering in it. In his opinion the consequent mode of life, be it what it may, has no bearing on the question. The chances of the most inveterate sinners are not less than those of mediocre sinners: the merited grace will give an equal assurance of salvation to both.[2]

The same author maintains that this interpretation does not contradict the Canon of the Council of Trent which anathematizes those who with absolute and infallible certitude would declare that they will have the gift of final perseverance, unless such a knowledge was

[1] "Ne craignons donc pas, sinon d'affirmer absolument, du moins d'énoncer comme chose plausible, et surtout d'espérer que le Coeur de Jésus se souviendra en temps opportun du droit acquis par les âmes pécheresses, mais suspendu en quelque sorte par leurs fautes et leur état de péché, et que faisant disparaitre l'obstacle, il fera du même coup revivre le droit." (BACHELET, in the *Etudes Rel.*, tom. LXXXVIII, p. 393).

[2] "Les fidèles qui, de bon coeur, s'efforcent de réaliser cette condition sont moralement assurés de leur salut. . . . La mauvaise volonté ne pourrait donc venir qu'après cette neuvaine. Outre que de ferventes communions, continuées pendent près d'un an, disposent peu l'âme aux abus de la présomption. Dieu saura précisément par sa grâce empêcher qu'on y tombe, ou du moins qu'on y persévère." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, pp. 226-227).

communicated to them through a special revelation.[1] The promise is first of all only a private revelation, Father Vermeersch remarks, nor can it be said to give us more than moral certainty. The very actuality of the revelation made to Blessed Margaret Mary, the exactness of the terms in which she couched the promise, the verification of the conditions and disposition required on our part, all these can be known only with that moral certainty which still leaves room for error, in order to stimulate us to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling.[2]

This will suffice regarding the interpretation of the first reward of which the *Great Promise* gives assurance, viz., the grace of final perseverance. The second spiritual favor promised to those who practice the Devotion of the Nine Fridays presents no such difficulties.

Here we find that all the versions extend the same hope, viz., that of receiving the last sacraments before dying. The variances found in the different versions are quite irrelevant. The text preferred by Father Vermeersch has *les sacrements*.[3] The Visitandines give preference to *leurs sacrements*.[4] In the formula of Bishop Languet we find *les sacrements de l'Eglise*.[5] According to the interpretation of the defenders of the *Great Promise* this expression is not to be taken in the sense which it obviously conveys. In this respect Father Vermeersch seems to be guilty of an inconsistency, for his contention

[1] "Si quis magnum illud usque ad finem perseverantiae donum se certo habiturum absoluta et infalibili certitudine dixerit, nisi hoc ex speciali revelatione didicerit, A. S." (*Council of Trent*, s. VI, c. 16).

[2] "Car la réalité même de la révélation faite à la Bienheureuse, l'exactitude des termes dans lesquels elle rapporte la promesse, la vérification par nous de la condition requise, tout cela ne nous est connu qu'avec cette certitude morale, qui laisse assez de chances d'erreur pour nous faire toujours opérer notre salut avec crainte et tremblement." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. II, p. 227).

[3] VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. I, p. 210.

[4] *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie*, ed. 1867, vol. II, p. 159.

[5] LANGUET, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

is that the text of the Twelfth Promise is to be interpreted literally, but he fails to conform to this decision when explaining this second reward. He comes to the conclusion that the sudden death of so many holy priests and religious without the sacraments of the dying, instead of militating against the promise, rather suggests its explanation. Many of these Priests and religious who thus pass away have undoubtedly made the Nine Fridays. How then can this fact be reconciled with the *Great Promise*? And his answer is that, while as to the first reward Our Lord gives an absolute assurance, He does not intend to give the same guarantee as to the second. As to the sacraments, therefore, the promise is conditional, inasmuch as Christ will furnish an occasion of receiving them, but only in case one is in need of them in order to place himself in the grace of God. The grace of final repentance is indispensable to salvation, but the last sacraments are only relatively necessary. A person, therefore, who enjoys the state of grace at the hour of death, is not to expect also the sacraments of the dying on the ground that he made the Nine Fridays, though Christ very frequently gives more than He promises. The mention of the sacraments is, therefore, to be considered as an accessory, the principal purpose of the promise is life eternal, which can be obtained without receiving the benefit of the second part of the promise, not, however, without the first part.[1]

Father Bachelet calls attention to the fact that there are two ways of receiving the sacraments, viz., in reality, when they are within our reach, and by desire, in the contrary case. Furthermore, he remarks that if the actual reception of the sacraments were guaranteed by the Twelfth Promise, a sense conveyed by the literal interpretation of the same, then it would be equivalent to an infallible assur-

[1] "La mention des sacrements n'est qu'accessoire, et qu'il s'agit surtout, sinon exclusivement, de donner aux privilegiés de la Grande Promesse l'assurance morale de leur salut éternel." (VERMEERSCH, *op, cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. II, p. 324).

ance against sudden death.[1] He is not inclined to admit such an absurdity. His claim therefore is that Christ will animate the soul with sentiments promoting justification in case the actual reception of the sacraments is not possible. These sentiments are contrition and charity.

From the above statements it is manifest that the interpreters lay little stress on, and attribute only a slight significance to the sacraments in connection with the *Great Promise.*

These interpretations are far from appealing to all. Many entirely refuse to give assent to them, and Father McNabb especially declares his dissatisfaction. The correspondence which, in form of a controversy, took place in 1903 in the *London Tablet,* reveals the conviction of 24 different persons who engaged therein. The 36 letters published in the above periodical were written by priests, laymen and converts. Some of these defend the promise, others reject it, while a third class tries to suggest a reasonable explanation of it. Great benefit can be drawn from the perusal of this correspondence, because all those who participated in the debate expressed their convictions unhesitatingly on the subject. Both the defenders of the promise and its opponents endeavored to accentuate the fact that they were actuated by the purest of motives, desirous of doing service to the Church whose highest interest and welfare they had at heart.

It is not our intention to enter into a detailed account of this exchange of letters. Suffice it to say that the defenders of the *Great Promise* considered the Devotion of the Nine Fridays as a great treasure constituting one of the most valuable and attractive features of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The opponents, on the other hand, pointed to the Twelfth Promise as a derogatory and disfigur-

[1] "Il n'est donc pas nécessaire de soutenir que la pratique en question assure à tous ceux qui s'en sont acquittés la réception effective des derniers sacrements, et par suite, devienne une sauveguarde infaillible contre la mort subite." (Bachelet, in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol. LXXXVIII, p. 393.)

ing characteristic of the same devotion, if accepted in the light of the interpretation generally attributed to it by the widely diffused devotional books, manuals, pamphlets, and leaflets disseminated among the different nations of the world. While some content themselves with applying to it such an adjective as *dangerous,* Father McNabb qualifies it as *scandalous.*[1]

That the text of the *Great Promise* in its present wording is liable to misleading interpretation is admitted even by some of its defenders. Boudinhon maintains that the reason why many priests abstain from speaking about the Devotion of the Nine Fridays is because they fear lest their hearers should conceive an illusion as to the certainty or degree of its efficaciousness.[2] Father Bachelet, dwelling on the fact that the promise was not published till 1867, suggests two suppositions with which to explain this postponement of circulation, viz., they might have judged it very difficult of interpretation and they might have also considered it dangerous.[3] It is easy to see how the interpretation of the reception of the sacraments and the grace of final repentance could have taken a form which by its very nature would be calculated to encourage presumption. We must never lose sight of the fact that the language of a theologian who weighs his statements with logical precision and gravity, is different from that employed by the devotional writer whose only aim is to excite fervor and piety. It was judged dangerous because it presumably advocated the certainty of salvation, irrespective of the mode of life consequent to the compliance

[1] McNabb, *The Twelfth Promise, American Cath. Quarterly,* vol. XXVIII, p. 753.

[2] "Quelques-uns, même parmi les meilleurs prêtres, évitent de parler de la neuvaine, parce qu'ils craignent que les fidèles ne se fassent illusions sur le degré ou la certitude de son efficacité." (Boudinhon, *Revue du Clergé Français,* tom. XXXVI, p. 114).

[3] "Deux suppositions restent plausibles. On a pu trouver cette promesse d'une interprétation trop difficile; on a pu aussi la juger dangereuse." (Bachelet, in the *Etudes Rel.,* vol. LXXXVIII, p. 387).

with the requirements of the *Great Promise.* Moreover, it seemed to contradict the dogmatic definition drawn up by the Council of Trent.

Father McNabb points out some interpretations of the promise found in leaflets scattered broadcast among the simple pious faithful, and rightly emphasizes the fact that it exposes them to the danger of falling into material superstition.[1] He expresses his disapproval in particular against the leaflet of Stephen Coubé, S. J., which is being circulated without an imprimatur and misleads its readers by the statement that "the Holy Church has adopted and blessed this practise." [2] Again, he maintains that the *Little Treasury of Leaflets* published by M. and S. Eaton, Dublin, does not quote the promise in a correct form. He also points out that a booklet translated from the French (Montreuil-sur-Mer in 1894) entitled, *Promises made by Our Lord Jesus Christ to Blessed Margaret Mary* contains 14 promises. The writer of this latter book is Father Francoisi, S. J., and it is circulated with the imprimatur of the Provincial.[3]

To the above we might add the objectionable statements contained in the *Catéchisme de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur, par un Prêtre Oblat de Marie Immaculée*, Paris, 1902. Speaking of the *Great Promise* this author says that it is certain both as to its origin and as to its effects. It is found in the authentic writings of Blessed Margaret Mary. Those who comply with the required conditions will obtain the necessary graces to persevere until death in the narrow path of salvation by a perfect observance of the precepts of the Church, or the evangelical counsels. The right to these extraordinary fruits, once acquired, cannot be lost even if afterwards one stays away from the frequentation of the sacraments. But the

[1] McNabb, *The Nine Fridays, American Cath. Quart.*, vol. XXVIII, p. 756.
[2] MacNabb, *loc. cit.*, vol. XXVIII, p. 752.
[3] McNabb, *loc. cit.*, p. 748.

graces received are so abundant that this complete forgetfulness of essential duties will be a rare exception and of short duration. Inexcusable are, therefore, all those who throw aside this easy plank of salvation.[1]

Another work which also contains statements that cannot be substantiated is the *Trésor Spirituel de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur de Jésus.*[2] Its author qualifies the promise as great on account of the grace of which it gives an absolute assurance, viz., the grace of final perseverance, a holy death, salvation. Furthermore, it offers a plank of salvation which is so easily accessible. The Sacred Heart has given us an answer to the question: Who can be saved?[3]

The author continues, he who communicates in a pious manner every month is on his way to heaven, and by communicating nine First Fridays he will obtain a special grace to persevere in this way until death.[4]

Examples may be found even in American magazines that are deserving of similar condemnation. The article published in the *American Mess. of the Sacred Heart*[5] is unquestionably capable of misinterpretation. In the foregoing pages it has already been pointed out how this author leaves one under the false impression

[1] "Qu'ils seraient inexcusables ceux qui laisseraient de côté cette planche de salut. Cette promesse est certaine, quant à son origine et quant à ses effets. Elle a été certainement faite à la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie, comme les écrits authentiques de la servante de Dieu en font foi. Ceux qui, après avoir fait, avec une piété sincère, les neuf communions, s'éloigneront ensuite de la fréquentation des sacrements, perdront-ils le droit aux fruits de la promesse divine? Non assurément. Mais les grâces obtenues sont si abondantes, que, cet oubli complet des devoirs essentiels de la vie chrétienne ne pourra être qu'une exception assez rare, au moins sera-t-elle momentanée." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 255-258).

[2] Chapelain de Montmartre, 2 vols., Paris, 1902.

[3] "Quelle grâce, la persévérance finale! une sainte mort! Le Sacré Coeur nous présente un moyen si facile pour se sauver, et nous a donné la réponse à la question: Qui donc pourra être sauvé?" (*Trésor Spirituel*, tom. I, p. 217).

[4] "Quiconque communie saintement, chaque mois, est dans la voie du ciel; et s'il a fait les neuf communions demandées, il obtiendra du Sacré Coeur une grâce spéciale pour persévérer dans cette voie jusqu'à la mort." (*Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 218).

[5] Sacerdos, *A Ground of Hope*, 1898, p. 156.

that we possess the autographic document on which the Twelfth Promise is based. "Again", says the same author, "what we contend is that the *Great Promise* does insure him an efficacious grace, wherewith he shall unfailingly, though with full liberty, perform whatever may be necessary for salvation. And it is precisely in this that the *Great Promise* goes further than the promises found in the Gospel."[1]

What answer is to be given to the objection of those who maintain that the Twelfth Promise is offered only as a means of impetrating a happy death, or perseverance in prayer, whereby a happy death can be infallibly secured? "We ask", he rejoins, "do these Holy Communions obtain that grace infallibly or not? If they obtain it for us infallibly, then, we say, that this interpretation does not differ substantially from our own. But, if the Communions do not obtain infallibly for us the grace spoken of in the objection, then Christ's words may be proved false, and many who have made the Nine Fridays worthily may still die in His disfavor, and be lost; hence we reject this interpretation."[2]

In the opinion of this author, the grace bestowed by the Twelfth Promise is of a higher order than the grace given by the sacraments which are directly instituted by Christ as the proper channels of graces for all the faithful. He Himself makes the assertion that: "No Sacrament was instituted as the cause of such an efficacious actual grace, that is, of a grace that would infallibly obtain the consent of the will," yet, it is precisely this kind of grace he claims for the person who has made the Nine Fridays.

This will suffice to indicate that the *Great Promise* has been interpreted in terms which are unwarrantable, and that many indefensible and misleading things have been said about it. To say that *this practice is adopted and blessed by the Church*, that *the*

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 162.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 163.

promised grace will be granted unfailingly that *if one complied with the requisite conditions he will persevere in good works throughout all the days of his life,* that *these Holy Communions will infallibly obtain for us a happy death,* that it is *the most accessible plank of salvation* . . . etc., are statements which may be qualified as unduly exaggerated, bold and unjustifiable in the absence of an authoritative pronouncement on the part of the Church. There is a serious danger in such language because simple-minded and credulous persons will not stop to inquire into the reasons, but will interpret literally such favorable statements, without questioning the authority of the writer, especially if he be an ecclesiastic.

If the advocates of the third mode of interpretation were in a position to corroborate their conclusions by putting the efficacy of the Twelfth Promise to the test, many who at present are loath to accept their views would fain do so. Such a test, however, would seem to involve an insurmountable difficulty, for it would necessitate the knowledge of our neighbor's spiritual state into which the eyes of God alone can penetrate.

The case is easy when the person in question received the Sacraments before death. But what is to be said about those who died without them? The interpreters answer: They either were not in need of them, because they already possessed the sanctitfying grace. or, in case they were, God gave them the necessary grace to sanctify their soul without the Sacraments of the dying. Thus we fall into a conjecture which can never be clarified because the ways of God are inscrutible. Again, they say: The man who died without the last rites of the Church, if he led an evil life lacked, in all likelihood, the necessary disposition when he engaged in the Devotion of the Nine Fridays. If he led a good life, and passed out of this world without the last Sacraments, then, they answer, in all probability, he was not in need of them. And in case he was guilty of suicide they ask the following questions: *Are you certain that the*

man in question made the Nine Fridays worthily? Are you certain that the act was not committed in a moment of mental derangement? Are you certain that God did not confer the efficacious grace of perfect contrition on that soul in the last instant of its life in the body? Until you can answer YES *to each of these questions, the third interpretation of the promise is not to be rejected.*[1]

Thus they cover practically all contingencies, and not one of them is such as the human mind could satisfactorily answer, for they lead into the realm of the supernatural, over which God alone holds sovereign and undisputed dominion.

Father McNabb thinks it remarkable that Blessed Margaret Mary died without receiving the last Sacraments.[2] With this assertion, no doubt, he means to intimate that a fact of such nature must needs militate against the efficacy of the *Great Promise*. Even if the remark were true, it would fail to be a serious objection, for the interpreters already anticipated such possibilities in the case of others. No one would maintain that such a holy person was in need of the Sacraments of the dying. However, it will not be out of place to shed some of the available light on this remark of Father McNabb. Practically all the reliable testimonies agree that the priest did not administer Holy Communion by way of viaticum, because her sickness was not considered sufficiently grave to justify such administration. The same testimonies apprise us of the fact that the day before she died she received Holy Communion and, having anticipated by a special presentiment that this was the last time she would have occasion to receive it during her life, she formed the intention of receiving it by way of viaticum.

[1] SACERDOS, *Ground of Hope, Amer. Mess. of the Sacred Heart*, 1898, p. 162.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, vol. XXVIII, p. 746.

We have her own words to prove this fact.[1]

As to the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, it may be said that the accessible sources when weighed and viewed collectively are calculated to induce one to pronounce in favor of its administration. It is known that her prophecy as to her death in the arms of two Sisters, viz., Françoise-Rosalie de Verchère and Péronne-Rosalie de Farges was actually fulfilled.[2] Hence, these two sisters were in a position to know the circumstances under which she expired. These same sisters in 1715 engaged in writing her life preliminary to the canonical process of her beatification. In this autographic Memoir, to the composition of which each of them contributed her share of efforts, they do not leave us in doubt as to the administration of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.[3]

In the extracts of the canonical procedure of 1715 we read that Sister Anne-Alexis de Mareschall, a contemporary of Blessed Margaret Mary, made a deposition that there was just about sufficient time to give her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.[4]

Sr. Claude Rosalie de Farges informs us in the course of her deposition that Blessed Margaret Mary asked to receive the last Sacraments, but, on account of undue delay, she was found in such a state that she was no longer in a condition to receive the benefit of the viaticum. Since she does not make such an unfavorable comment concerning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, we can legitimately infer that it was given.

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[1] "J'ai reçu cet adorable sacrement en viatique, la dernière fois que j'ai communié." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 526.)

[2] "Mes enfants je mourrai entre vos bras." (*Vie et Oeuvres.* ed. 1915, tom. I, pp. 507, 540.)

[3] "Une heure avant qu'elle expirât, elle fit appeler sa Supérieure. Elle la pria de lui faire donner l'extrême onction. Cela fait, elle la remercia. Après quoi, elle demeura quelque temps dans un grand calme, et ayant proféré le saint nom de Jésus, elle rendit doucement son esprit." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 294.)

[4] "Et effectivement elle se trouva si mal qu'on n'eut que le temps de lui donner l'extrême onction qu'elle reçut en expirant." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 526.)

[5] *Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 526.

All doubts on this subject ought to disappear entirely when one reads the original circular of the Convent of Paray written on August 8, 1691, one year after the death of the Beata. It can be learned from this that she expired while the last unction was being given.[1] Father Croiset whose work appeared the same year gives testimony to the same effect and, judging from the language he employs, it may be concluded that he drew his information from the same circular.[2] It would seem that in the face of all this first hand testimony the statements of those who, having consulted only secondary sources, maintain that her death occurred while the fourth unction was given,[3] ought to fall to the ground.

It is not our intention to create an impression in the mind of the reader that this point has a bearing of paramount importance on the interpretation of the *Great Promise*. We merely wish to clarify and correct the mistaken notion which so many spiritual writers entertain on this particular point. Even, if it were unquestionably certain that she did not receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the arguments of those who cling to the third mode of interpretation would not need to undergo even the slightest change, and would still retain their full original force. This was made clear in one of the preceding paragraphs. Such an observation, therefore, on the part of Father McNabb, even if he could demonstrate his statement, would fail to prove a stumbling-block to those against whom it was directed.

[1] "Une heure avant sa mort, elle fit appeler notre très honorée Mère, elle l'a pria de lui faire donner l'extrême onction, et la remercia des soulagements que l'on s'empressait de lui donner. Ayant jeté les yeux sur son crucifix, elle expira pendant qu'on faisait la dernière onction." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1916, *Appendix,* to vol. I, p. 571.)

[2] *L'Abregé de la Vie de Coeur Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, La dévotion au Sacré Coeur,* vol. II, p. 282.

[3] Bougaud, *Hist. de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie,* Paris, 1875, ch. XV, p. 372.

CHAPTER XIV.

IMPORT OF THE PRIVATE REVELATION REFERRING TO THE GREAT PROMISE.

With the foregoing probably all the more important questions in connection with the interpretation of the *Great Promise* have been touched upon. We shall now proceed to investigate what degree of credibility is to be attributed to this supposed revelation from the fact that (1) the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary were submitted to an examination by ecclesiastical authority; (2) on September 22, 1827, a decree was issued to the effect that nothing was found in them deserving of theological censure;[1] and, finally, (3) in 1864 she was beatified.

It will be well, at the outset, to adduce a few analogous cases which will help to solve the question proposed. Admitting that the revelation claimed to have been communicated to Blessed Margaret Mary actually took place, even then it would be only a private revelation. An approval or confirmation given by the Church to a private revelation means nothing more than that it contains nothing contrary to faith and morals. A decision of this nature imposes no obligation on any one to give it his assent.

[1] "Nihil hisce in Scriptis et Epistolis fuisse repertum theologica censura notandum. Nihil obstare et procedi posse ad ulteriora." Die 22 Sept., 1827.

Benedict XIV speaking of such relevations as those of St. Hildegard (approved in part by Eugene III), St. Bridget (approved by Boniface IX), and St. Katherine of Sienna (approved by Gregory VI) says: "We are not obliged, nor is it possible, to give the assent of the Catholic faith to such revelations, but only of human faith in conformity with the dictates of prudence, even if they be approved by the Holy See. Therefore, one may dissent from them without any jeopardy as to the integrity of his faith. Even if such private revelations be proved and accepted, though they are to be believed by the persons to whom they were made, the adverse opinions retain the same probability which they possessed before the revelation.[1]

Again, the same author declares that the revelations to which women lay claim must be scrutinized and examined with the utmost carefulness and accuracy. It may happen, he continues, that a saint may, from preconceived notions and from some fixed ideas of his imagination, fancy that certain things are revealed to him by God, which yet God does not reveal.[2]

In the light of the foregoing information in our possession it will be well to investigate the nature of the approbation which the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary received at the hands of the Sacred Congregation.

[1] "Praedictis revelationibus, etsi approbatis, non debere nec posse a nobis adhiberi assensum Fidei Catholicae, sed trantum Fidei humanae, iuxta regulas prudentiae. Posse aliquem salva et integra Fide Catholica, assensum revelationibus praedictis non praestare, et ab eis recedere. Theologi et mystici fatentur, quod revelationes privatae quamvis probatae et acceptae, etsi ab illis, qui tales revelationes patiuntur, credi debent, apud alios contrariae (sermo est de sententiis, quae dictis revelationibus adversantur) eamdem obtinent probabilitatem, quam ante revelationem habebant." (Benedict XIV, *Opera Omnia,* vol. III, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione,* lib. III, c. LIII, p. 15.)

[2] "Ergo fieri potest, ut aliquis Sanctus ex anticipatis opinionibus aut ideis in phantasia fixis aliqua sibi a Deo revelata putet, quae a Deo revelata non sunt." (Benedict XIV, *op. cit.,* lib. III. c. LIII, §§ 11 and 17.)

No one will deny that the cause of the popularity of the Nine Fridays' Devotion lies in the graces promised. Boudinhon remarks that since the special attraction for the majority of the faithful consists in the assurance of a Christian death and eternal salvation, this phase of the *Great Promise* must have been considered in the process of the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary.[1] Father Vermeersch maintains that the Vistandines of Rome are still in possession of a manuscript containing the authentic Italian translation of the writings of the Beata as they were presented at the process of her Beatification.[2] In this document the *Great Promise* is heavily underlined, a sign that it did not pass by oversight but by mature consideration. M. Charrier, author of the life of Father de la Colombière, verified this statement in 1895. We owe this intelligence to the kindness of Father Hamon, author of the recent life of Blessed Margaret Mary.

But the decree of Sept. 22, 1827, is not to be considered as a formal approbation of all the writings of the Beata. Nor did the letter form a part of the discussion at that time. One could, however, conclude that the promise was capable of explanation corresponding to sound theology. In 1844 a discussion took place as to the *Virtues and other supernatural favors of the venerable servant of God.* On this occasion the office of the *Promotor Fidei* was filled by Mgr. Frattini, while that of the *Postulator Causae* by Mgr. Arnoldi. The former draws attention to the suspicious fact that the visions of Blessed Margaret Mary several times take the form of an assurance of predestination given to living people. It is hardly credible, he continues, that the gift of final perseverance which lies hidden in the inscrutible decrees of God, would be revealed to Blessed Mar-

[1] In the *Revue du Clergé Français,* tom. XXXVI, p. 119.
[2] VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.,* tom. II, p. 216, foot-note.

garet Mary with such frequency.[1] St. Francis de Sales declares those revelations to be especially open to suspicion which give assurance of predestination and confirmation in grace.[2] To this objection the *Postulator Causae* replied to the effect that all such promises imply the supposition that one complies with all the other requirements or means of salvation. He compares these promises with those made in favor of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, or of the Rosary. God promises to those who perform certain prescribed spiritual exercises a more abundant grace which will help them to keep His commandments and to enter life eternal.[3] Here it may be remarked that the *Postulator Causae,* Mgr. Arnoldi, must have attached a special importance to the words of the Twelfth Promised: *Si elle ne se trompe* (if she be not mistaken), for he insisted that they should not be separated from, or left out of the text.

On the whole the discussion, as the official documents record it, does not appear altogether satisfactory. Even Father Thurston remarks that "both the objection and reply appear somewhat perfunctory and ineffective."[4] Thus, while the contents of the *Great Promise* were submitted to some discussion, it can be said without

[1] "Nunc vero quis persuadere poterit perseverantiae finalis donum, quod in imperscrutabilibus Dei decretis occulte delitescere solet, *quodque perraro patefieri,* illud tam facile tamque frequenter uni Ven. Margaritae Mariae manifestatum fuisse? Profecto is argui nullatenus poterit, qui ex doctrina ipsius Sancti Francisci Salesii huiusmodi revelationes ob rerum revelatarum naturam suspectas dixerit." (*Animadversiones* Protoris Fidei supra dubio de Virtutibus. . . .§ 80, p. 48.)

[2] *Oeuvres,* vol. XIII, ed. 1831, *Lettres,* bk. II, Ep. 23; ib. THURSTON, *The Month,* vol. CI, p. 638.

[3] "Iam vero ex recta theologorum post Angelicum Doctorem doctrina, nulla est vera devotio, quae animum perfecte non inveniat Deo obsequentem, eamque ab causam in his omnibus tacita illa conditio est intelligenda ut mandata legis, sine quibus nemo potest ad vitam ingredi, diligenter observentur. In talibus ergo promissionibus (sicut in commendatione SS. Rosarii, vel cultus B. Mariae Virginis de Monte Carmelo, aliisque piis exercitationibus, quibus peculiariter addicti homines spe gloriae coelestis confortari audivimus) in fere est quod promittitur, Deum illis aut illis exercitationibus mediis, uberiora suae gratiae auxilia, quibus praecepta servent et ad vitam ingrediantur, hominibus concessurum." (*Responsio ad Animadversiones,* §253.)

[4] *The Nine Fridays,* in the *Month,* vol. CI, p. 638.

fear of contradiction, that the authenticity of the letter or the actuality of the related revelation was left entirely out of consideration. Hence, even Father Thurston, a zealous defender of the Twelfth Promise, is forced to give expression to the conviction that "it is still possible that the letter attributed to Blessed Margaret Mary may be spurious or interpolated, or that she herself was the victim of an illusion." [1]

Furthermore, it is to be remembered that the conditional clause with which the Beata premises her revelation could have been considered as safeguard against what might have proved an obstacle to her Beatification. The *Postulator Causae,* Mgr. Arnoldi, apparently anticipated some difficulty of this character, therefore, he would not brook the omission of the clause from the rest of the text. Besides, beatification, and even canonization is only a declaration of heroic virtues the person in question practised while on earth. Even heroic faith may be compatible with certain unwitting errors with regard to the doctrine of faith and morals, still more with regard to private revelations and supernatural visions. As a matter of fact, when the Church canonizes or beatifies a person she does not thereby declare that all the writings of the same are to be followed, and his teachings unqualifiedly accepted. St. Thomas frankly, though reluctantly, confesses that St. John Chrysostom fell into errors. St. Thomas himself taught some doctrines which the Church does not accept, nor does the canonization of St. Anselm necessitate the conclusion that the Church advocates his *a priori* arguments concerning the existence of God.[2] If, therefore, these learned saints taught material heresy without detriment to their holiness, no greater immunity from material error need be claimed for a contemplative nun. This is one of the reasons which induced Mgr. Arnoldi to insist that Mgr. Frattini, the *Advocatus Diaboli,*

[1] *Loc. cit.,* p. 640.
[2] McNabb, *Tablet,* May, 1903, p. 737.

should always quote the text of the *Great Promise* with the introducing words: *Si elle ne se trompe.* Did Blessed Margaret Mary use these words in obedient submission to her Superior's suggestion, or, did she mean to express an actual doubt as to the proper interpretation of the revelation, are questions which no man can answer with anything like absolute certainty.

Before we offer our own opinion as to the interpretation of the *Great Promise,* it will be advisable to summarize the more relevant facts of the situation. The letter on which the Twelfth Promise is founded is lost. Its earliest transcription dates from about the year 1714. It was not published till 1867. In the meantime the writings of the Beata were frequently misquoted and interpolated at the hands of spirital writers. The question of the letter's authenticity and the actuality of the revelation remained untouched during the process of her beatification. There are three leading interpretations attributed to it. The Church does not come to our rescue in our attempt to solve the numerous difficulties arising from its wording, nor does she take cognizance of it officially. Therefore, one is free to form one's own conclusion in the matter, and we shall suggest an opinion which, in our estimation, is not devoid of probability. In this respect the works of Blessed Margaret Mary, her own letters as well as those of her contemporaries and acquaintances, published in 1915 in authentic reliable form by Archbishop Gauthey, will be of notable assistance to us. A few remarks concerning this *latest and only authentic edition of the life and works of the Beata,* will not be out of place at this point.

Archbishop Gauthey admits that the first two editions of the life and works of Blessed Margaret Mary were not of such character as would stand the search-light of modern historical criticism. Therefore, realizing the deep interest recently awakened in the incidents

which took place in the life of the Beata, he decided to edit this present work, scientific both in its appearance and in the execution of the plan proposed. It is deserving of trust, for it is compiled with the care modern critics require of a scientist.[1] It was the various interpolations of the two editions of 1867 and 1876 whose source was not ascertainable that induced him to engage in his present undertaking.[2]

The Prefaces which he contributed to the Memoir and the letters of the Beata as well as to the *Vie par les Contemporaines* are of the utmost importance, because in it he imparts all the general information that can be gathered from reliable authentic sources. In this work the letter on which the *Great Promise* is based is found in two distinct places, viz., in the first volume, p. 261, and in the second volume, p. 397. We deem it necessary to give some consideration to these references individually.

The first volume contains a Memoir composed by *Les Contemporaines*. The authors of this manuscript Memoir are two Sisters who lived contemporaneously with Blessed Margaret Mary, had the privilege of being her intimate friends, and that of being present at her death-bed. It is this document which was subjected to so many variations and interpolations not only at the hands of many spiritual writers since 1715, but the Visitandines themselves. For the first time in its history, it was edited without any additions or abbreviations. An opportunity is thus given us to

[1] "Une édition complétée et améliorée, selon les exigences de la critique et avec tous les soins qu'exige la réproduction fidèle des manuscrits. Il fallait donner à la nouvelle édition l'appareil scientifique capable de faire autorité." (*Préface Générale, Vie et Oeuvres,* tom. I, pp. 10 and 11.)

[2] "Les éditions (1867 et 1876) avaient intercalé dans son texte tous les autres documents contemporains qu'on avait trouvés. Ce travail n'était plus une oeuvre authentique, de première main. On ne pouvait savoir d'où venaient certains récits, certaines citations, et quelle était leur autorité." (*Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie*, ed. 1915, tom. I, p. 12.)

acquaint ourselves with the order, style, chronology and the spirit of the two Contemporaries.[1]

In the second volume of this work, p. 397, another reference is found to the *Great Promise*. The letter of the Beata addressed to Mother de Saumaise is published here in its entirety. Following are the points to be noted in connection with this letter.

It is quoted from a manuscript which is not that of Blessed Margaret Mary. An investigation will discover that there are five different collections of manuscripts, scattered in various places from which a knowledge may be gained as to the writings of the Beata. These manuscripts are designated by the numbers 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9. In this series of manuscripts Archbishop Gauthey gives preference to the collection which is marked number 6. It contains those writings of Blessed Margaret Mary which Mother de Saumaise preserved, and which are supposed to have been copied from the original. All these have been penned by Sister Péronne-Rosalie de Farges. It is possible that the same letter may occur in 3 or 4 of the above collections of manuscripts. Thus the letter referring to the *Great Promise* is found in No. 6, p. 128; in No. 3, p. 5; in No. 8, p. 43; and in No. 9, p. 23. Besides this an Italian translation of it which was made in Rome in 1828 or 1829 is also extant.

In 1715 a total of 97 letters was submitted to the Sacred Congregation. These letters were afterwards returned to the Visitandines. When in 1818 the process of the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary was again resumed, only 68 of the above letters were re-

[1] "C'est l'oeuvre intégrale des dites Contemporaines, que nous publions, pour la première fois, dans sa simplicité authentique, telle quelle est sortie de leur plume. Nous avons retranché tout ce qui y avait été intercalé ou ajouté, dans les éditions précédentes, pour le remettre ailleurs, chaque morceau à sa place documentaire." (*Vie et Oeuvres,* ed. 1915, pp. 34 and 35.)

covered. These were handed to the Sacred Congregation, and translated into Italian.[1] In one of the preceding paragraphs a passing reference has been made to these letters, and it has been pointed out that out of 27 letters which Blessed Margaret Mary wrote to Mother de Saumaise, and which were collected in 1715, not a single one was autographic. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the letter in question was submitted to the Sacred Congregation only in a copied form that might indeed have been transcribed from the original. The difficulty that presents itself here is one that is not likely to be solved at any future time. If of the 97 letters collected in 1715 they presented 58 autographs to the Ecclesiastical Superiors in Rome, why did they submit only the copies of those 27 letters which Blessed Margaret Mary directed to Mother de Saumaise. The natural inference would be that even at that period these autographs must have been lost. No other explanation can justify the action of the Visitandines. In this supposition the Italian translation fails to add any weight to the authenticity of the letter in question, for it is only the translation of a copied letter. The above statement seems to be tacitly corroborated by Bishop Languet, who, though to all likelihood having access to most if not all the autographic documents then extant, fails to quote the contents of the letter in its original wording, and prefers to explain them in a narrative way.

[1] *Vie et Oeuvres*, ed. 1915, tom. II, pp. 9 and 10.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR CONCLUSIONS AS REGARDS THE GREAT PROMISE.

In view of the facts thus far presented one is justified in stating that the evidence as to the historicity of the letter in question is inconclusive. It is likewise true that, on the ground of the evidence adduced, not a few writers are inclined to pronounce in favor of its authenticity. There is another class of spiritual writers who maintain that not the slightest doubt can be entertained as to the historicity of the letter in question. Needless to say, that this last class of writers cannot find a sufficient warrant to vindicate such a position.

From the perusal of accessible evidence it seems fairly certain that Blessed Margaret Mary actually wrote a letter in which she advocated a devotion similar to the present Devotion of the Nine Fridays. This may be concluded from the various versions of the present letter which, though transcribed at different times and preserved at different places, agree in substance as to the spiritual exercises and the reward to be expected. Since, however, the autographic document containing an authentic exposition of the revelation by the words of its Authoress is lost, and knownig full well that in the course of its recopying, notwithstanding the care exercised by the copyist, even unintentional mistakes are bound to creep in, we are confronted with the doubt whether we possess the wording of the letter as framed by the Beata. Whatever may be the

nature of this doubt, it would hardly justify an absolute rejection of every factor connected with the *Great Promise*. Therefore, until a more convincing evidence is adduced in favor of the letter's authenticity, we must consider the document as doubtful. Prudence would dictate not to reject it entirely, but to make such use of it as the circumstances would warrant, provided it be interpreted in conformity with sound theological principles.

Father Hamon maintains, that none of the essential features of the *Great Promise* have been subjected to a change, as for instance, *communion on the first nine Fridays for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance, not to die without their sacraments,* but there is no criterion which would justify such an admission as regards the other words. Again, it is a well known fact that the contents of the letter are of such nature, that even the most insignificant modification, like the one introduced by Bishop Languet, is calculated to be the cause of a notable change in its interpretation.

That Bishop Languet was in a better position than any other individual in his time, or since, to ascertain some of the facts concerning this letter, hardly anybody would deny. That he gave a mature consideration to the life he wrote is evidenced by his letters published in the first volume of the 1915 edition of *Vie et Oeuvres de la Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie,* pp. 619-626. Throughout our research into this problem we met with no warrant which would justify the supposition that the Visitandines invented the revelation in question, and, to give it more weight, framed an imaginary letter. To accuse Bishop Languet of a similar crime would be equivalent to contradicting all the traits of his character made public by contemporary documents. He was a man endowed with a sensitive conscience, rare gifts of mind, mature judgment and a high regard for the opinion of others. He hesitated at first to associate his name with the life of Blessed Margaret Mary, fearing the ridicule of the sceptic age in which he lived. But, finally, he acceded to the entreaties of

Sister Péronne-Rosalie de Farges, and "all Europe knew that the life of the servant of the Sacred Heart, already so calumniated, was edited by the Bishop of Soissons, a member of the French Academy."[1]

At the reading of the book the Jansenists, the philosophers, a number of Catholics, and even some Bishops covered their faces "ridiculing religion and dishonoring piety.[2]" The blasphemous lawyer Barbier noted in his journal: "M. Languet, Bishop of Soissons, wrote the greatest folly imaginable, the life of Marie Alacoque."[2] Mgr. Languet's membership in the French Academy testifies to his learning, while his elevation to the Episcopate and his writings give ample evidence to holiness of life and to the estimation he enjoyed in the eyes of his contemporaries both clerical and lay. Therefore, whether he possessed the document in question or received his information from another trustworthy source he could not be accused of imposition, which imputation would be justifiable had he published such a statement without sufficient warrant. This is the only possible way by which his allusion to the *Great Promise* can be explained. His character as portrayed by Father Hamon on the strength of contemporary documents, would militate against any attempt at deception. In our opinion this is an additional reason which ought to induce one to pronounce in favor of a letter similar to the one in question. Nor is there anything that would militate against accepting Bishop Languet's rendition of the *Great Promise*.

Another indirect proof favoring the letter's authenticity may be drawn from the following circumstance. On Jan. 22, 1687, Blessed Margaret Mary wrote a letter to her sick brother who was a parish priest. This letter was written about 16 months prior to the date of

[1] HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.*, tom. XCI, p. 727.

[2] HAMON, *Loc. cit.*, p. 727.

[3] "M. Languet, évêque de Soissons et frère du Curé de Sain-Sulpice, a fait la plus grande sottise qu'il pouvait faire, la vie de Marie Alacoque. (HAMON, in the *Etudes Rel.*, vol. XCI, p. 727).

the epistle containing the revelation of the *Great Promise*. Having at heart her brother's restoration to health, she sent him a remedy by means of which she hoped to accomplish it. In a letter dispatched simultaneously she instructed him to take this restorative for nine days while fasting, also to say or have nine masses said for nine Saturdays in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and nine Masses of the Passion for nine Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

This same letter may be found in the authentic 1915 edition of her works by Archbishop Gauthey.[2]. The number under which it is printed in this work is LIX. Its autograph is not extant. The collection of manuscript letters from which it was reprinted is designated by number 8, and our letter is found on page 165.

From this letter it is manifest that, for reasons known only to herself, and not explained in her writings, she attached a special significance to the number which so frequently occurs in it, viz., the number nine. Nor would it suffice to dismiss this evidence by pointing out the fact that novena is an old institution in the history of mankind. It is true that a trace of it can be found even among the Romans in their festivities claled *parentalia novendialia*. It must also be admitted that in the Christian mortuary celebrations the ninth day is accepted by the *Constitutiones Apostolicae*[3] and placed on the same rank with the third and the seventh day. In France, Belgium and the Lower Rhine, the custom arose of making a novena to a certain saint in order to recover one's health. This would only

[1] "De plus, nous avons promis que vous prendriez pendant neuf jours les billets que je vous envoye, un chaque jour à jeun, et que vous diriez ou feriez dire neuf Messes durant neuf samedis à l'honneur de l'Immaculée Conception de la très sainte Vierge Marie, Mère de Dieu, et autant de Messes de la Passion pendant neuf Vendredis, à l'honneur du Sacré Coeur de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ." (LANGUET, *op. cit.*, Paris, 1729, liv. X, p. 382.)

[2] *Vie et Oeuvres* ,ed. 1915, vol. II., p. 344.

[3] P. G., vol. I, col. 1147, lib. VIII, cap. XLII.

explain why Blessed Margaret Mary suggested a novena to her sick brother.

But, up to the time of the Beata, as far as we could ascertain, a novena implied a devotional exercise to be performed nine consecutive days. Such was its import even among the pagans. Therefore, this practice in itself would fail to explain sufficiently why Blessed Margaret Mary specified nine successive Fridays for her brother, and not nine consecutive days.

Be that as it may, the significance she attached to this number is quite manifest. It is likewise clear that novena as it was interpreted in the time of Blessed Margaret Mary does not satisfactorily explain her mind in this particular case. It is the fact that she connected this number with *nine consecutive Fridays* which must be emphasized.

Friday is a day appropriated for the Passion of Christ. It was the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi that Christ designated as the proper time to solemnize the Feast of the Sacred Heart. It was on the first Fridays of each month, that He asked her to make amends and reparation in honor of the suffering Heart, and to induce others to do so. All these considerations are calculated to shed some rays of light on the question why she would specify nine Fridays for the *Great Promise,* instead of other days. They may also be adduced as an indirect proof in favor of the assumption that she actually may have written a letter similar to the one attributed to her, in which she attached such a special importance to nine First Friday Communions.

Whether she was really favored with a revelation to this effect, is a question which no man can answer with certainty. If, however, one would admit that she wrote such a letter, it is to be presumed that, owing to the holy life she led, she must have been in good faith, to say the least, when she laid claim to such an unparalleled communication.

Whether such a letter was written by her or not, is a question which cannot be solved at present. Judging from all the indications she would likely do so, but even then a doubt remains as to its original wording. Since, however, there is a document for which some claim an undoubted historicity, it is necessary to submit it to examination in the following pages.

We fail to agree with Father Bachelet's assertion that the account of Bishop Languet is in no way dubitative.[1] On the contrary, it would seem that the clause of reserve which his account of the Twelfth Promise contains, is more striking even than that of the other versions. It must be admitted that he words: *Si elle ne se trompe,* characteristic of all the other formulas, are omitted from it, but they are supplanted by the terms: *En lui faisant esperer* (He led her to hope). Furthermore, we contend that the above words which precede Bishop Languet's rendition of the Twelfth Promise ought to be used as explanatory of the words preceding the promise as given in all other versions, viz., *Si elle ne se trompe.* After due consideration given to this matter there is good ground to suppose that the clause of reserve in connection with this promise was not used in submission to Mother Greyfié's injunction, but is actually expressive of a hesitancy as to whether Blessed Margaret Mary interpreted the revelation correctly or not. The fact that she failed to attach any special significance to this incident of her life, that for almost three years she failed to communicate it to others, for no records can be found which would lead us to believe that she made mention of it in any other writings or *viva voce,* goes to corroborate the above conclusion. The attitude she displayed towards this revelation is so different from what one would ordinarily expect of her, that nothing but a doubt as to its full comprehension can ex-

[1] Le récit nullement dubitatif de Mgr. Languet. *Etudes Rel.,* tom. LXXXVIII, p. 387.

plain it. Had she been absolutely certain of the assurance of such extraordinary graces she would not have failed to stimulate the devotees of the Sacred Heart to avail themselves of a devotion blessed with such far-reaching spiritual consequences. Nor is there any reason why her attitude towards this particular revelation should assume such a striking contrast to her general disposition of mind.

The account of Bishop Languet's version of the *Great Promise* can be rendered into English as follows. *In another letter she prescribed a practice for honoring the Heart of Jesus Christ, a practice which to her was familiar. and which was suggested to her by Our Lord, in leading her to hope for the grace of final repentance, and for that of receiving the Sacraments of the Church before dying, for all those who would make use of it. It was that of making a novena of Communions for that intention, and for honoring the heart of Jesus Christ; in placing each of these Communions on every First Friday of the month for nine consecutive months.*[1]

From this it is manifest that Bishop Languet's version contains all the essential characteristics of the *Great Promise*. The practice suggested by Our Lord was that of going to Holy Communion the first Friday of each month for nine consecutive months. The intention one is to form when engaging in this devotion is to honor the Heart of Christ, and to hope to receive the grace of final repentance and the Sacraments of the church before dying. In our opinion a great stress must be laid on the introductory words of the *Great Promise*, viz., *En lui faisant esperer*. These are to be taken as the determin-

[1] "Dans une autre Lettre elle prescrit une pratique pour honorer le Coeur de Jésus-Christ; pratique qui lui étoit familiere, & que Notre Seigneur lui avait suggérée, en lui faisant esperer la grâce de la pénitence finale, & celle de recevoir les Sacremens de l'Eglise avant que de mourir, pour ceux qui l'observeroient. C'étoit de faire une neuvaine de Communion à cette intention & pour honorer le Coeur de Jésus-Christ, en plaçant chacune de ces Communions à chaque premier vendredi du mois, pendant neuf mois de suite." (LANGUET, *La Vie de la Venerable Mère Marguerite-Marie*, liv. VII, pp. 241 and 242, Paris, 1729.)

ants of its general efficacy as a whole, as modifying, to some extent, all the rewards promised by it. They clearly indicate the idea of hope, not of absolute infallible assurance; of humble expectation, and not of unfailing irrevocable guarantee, as the advocates of the third mode of interpretation are in the habit of asserting. The spiritual benefit that may accrue to the recipient of the nine Holy Communions is not the grace of perseverance in good during the period intervening before the completion of the devotion and the hour of death, but only the grace of final repentance. This pious expectation, the verification of which, with humble confidence may be piously anticipated, in no way nullifies the efficacy of the *Great Promise,* nor would this revelation be rendered worthless on account of it. Christ, by extending the prospect of greater good, obliged Himself, so to speak, to be more generous than He would have been had He not imparted such a supernatural manifestation.

This interpretation may be considered as a compromise between the two contending factions, one of which invests the *Great Promise* with an absolute infallible efficacy while the other rejects it entirely by denying its authenticity. Our presentation of it does not destroy the sanguine expectations of the advocates of the third mode of interpretation, for all the effects might follow just as unfailingly. However, it would be more compatible with our state as sinful creatures, only to hope for such a remuneration rather than feel that through any action of ours we have acquired an inalienable right to its infallible fulfilment. The propagation of the *Great Promise* in this sense may be made without any fear of being misunderstood. It is calculated to produce as much spiritual good as the other form, which is not credited by many because, as a well-known and highly respected ecclesiastic puts it, "it is so incredibly unreal."[1]

There are some devotional writers who in their fervor maintain

[1] McNabb, *American Cath. Quarterly,* vol. XXVIII, p. 752.

that by means of the Devotion of the Nine Fridays one acquires a right *de condigno* to a reward which consists in the grace of final perseverance. It is hard to see where they can find a theological justification for a belief advocating such an infallible granting of the above grace. Is it likely that such a reward would be given by God in exchange for the performance of so few spiritual acts occupying so small a portion of man's whole life? Again, the life of those who have made the Nine Fridays, even apparently with the best of intentions, as far as human judgment can penetrate, are far from being free from future acts that jeopardize their salvation. It is true that even some of those writers who invest the *Great Promise* with an absolute efficacy discountenance the assertion that such a reward is the result of merit on our part. Furthermore, they are loath to admit that one has a strict right to such a signal remuneration. Some of them refer us to the infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart as the exclusive fountain-head from which this magnanimous spiritual recompense flows freely without any merit on our part.

But, could it not be remarked that their insistence on the infallible bestowal of the promised grace emphasizes on our part a certain right to expect it as a reward acquired by acts performed, and on the part of God a certain obligation to grant it? If it will be given infallibly, then God is not free to refuse it. If He be not free to refuse it, then we acquire a right to it. Yet, some of the advocates of the third mode of interpretation would under no consideration admit such a right. However, if they were consistent they should not fail to designate this reward of final perseverance as a right acquired by the performance of certain prescribed acts, and by the compliance with certain demanded conditions. All the conditions required to merit such a grace *de condigno,* can be pointed out in the case under discussion.

To merit such a grace *de condigno* it is necessary that the recipient of the nine Holy Communions be in the state of sanctifying grace

while a member of the Church militant. The work in which he engages must be (1) free from all coercion; (2) good as to its object, end and circumstances; and (3) supernatural. On the part of God there is required an explicit promise of a special reward attached to a special work. Now, all these conditions are verified absolutely in the case of one who with the proper intention and disposition performs the Devotion of the Nine Fridays. The conclusion is that he merits the grace of final perseverance *de condigno*.

Nor is there any necessity of insisting on a due proportion between the good works performed and the reward promised, as maintained by the writer of the article a *Ground of Hope*.[1] It is well known that the reason for condign merit may arise from two sources, viz., justice and fidelity. While a due proportion between the good act and the merit is requisite in the case of the former, the promise, which as they contend was made by Christ, supplies what is wanting in case of fidelity.

From this reasoning it should be legitimately concluded that the grace of final perseverance is actually merited *de condigno* by one who complies with all the conditions of the *Great Promise*. At least such a conclusion can be reached if the principles of some of the advocates of the third mode of interpretation are carried to their logical synthesis. This, however, plainly conflicts with the general uniform teaching of the theologians, who unanimously deny that the grace of final perseverance can be merited *de condigno*. It is true that some admit the possibility of such a merit *de congruo fallibili*, but only by frequent good acts often repeated throughout one's whole life.

"Furthermore," says Father Hurter, "if the just could merit the grace (final perseverance), and would still remain exposed to the danger of losing it, then, he failed to merit in the proper sense.

[1] *American Mess. of the Sacred Heart*, 1898, p. 159.

While, on the other hand, the supposition that he could merit it so as to exclude the possibility of forfeiture seems to involve a contradiction with the Sacred Scripture and the Church."[1] Even if this grace of final perseverance should be confined only to the last few moments of man's terrestrial life, not all the difficulties would be removed thereby. Such a supposition would affect only the duration of the grace but leaving its nature intact.

In the face of all these difficulties it is easy to see how a more conservative theologian would reject the idea of the grace of final perseverance both in its active and passive sense, and would substitute for it the grace of final repentance. Father Bachelet in his oft-quoted article does not hesitate to state that those who after the completion of the novena of worthy Communions avoid all mortal sins can, on their death-bed, claim this reward as their right. He denies the same right to those who were actuated by a good intention when they engaged in the Devotion of the Nine Fridays but, through human frailty, deviated from the path of virtue in time subsequent to its completion.

In our opinion, no sufficient warrant can be found to justify such a discrimination between the two classes, if we take it for granted that the promise was actually made, and the wording in which it is couched expresses the proper scope of the revelation. These two classes, therefore, may entertain an equal hope as regards the reception of the grace of final repentance. The text of the *Great Promise* does not concern itself with the life led in time posterior to the fulfilment of the condition required. Therefore, it may be justly concluded, that since it presupposes only a faithful compliance with certain demanded conditions and dispositions, the infinite mercy of

[1] "Praeterea, vel iustus ita meret hoc donum, ut ipsum iterum possit amittere, et tunc illud proprie non merit; vel ita meret, ut illud nequeat amplius amittere; hoc autem videtur contra sensum Scripturae et Ecclesiae." (*Theologiae Dogmaticae Compendium*, tom. III, ed. 1903, p. 202.)

the Sacred Heart will extend the same privilege to both the above classes indiscriminately. Nor is it our intention to reduce the two classes to a rank of equality as regards all their subsequent deserts and rewards. We merely mean to intimate that the grace of final repentance is a common acquisition of both. Would it be out of place to say that a promise of this nature is likely to have been made in behalf of the frail, not obstinate, sinners rather than for the sake of the just?

However, no man can be too much on his guard in this lenient interpretation, no matter how plausible it may appear. It must be borne in mind that this document is dubious. Though there might be a sufficient evidence to justify its acceptation, still, there is nothing absolutely certain in connection with it. The wording and the revelation are alike doubtful. Therefore, we must not place any more trust in it than the circumstances would warrant. It ought to be advocated only as an encouragement to make the Nine Fridays and thus to make use of all the possible means that are calculated to make our salvation secure. One should never speak of it as an absolute assurance. On the contrary it is imperative to accentuate the words of Blessed Margaret Mary found in one of the letters to Father Croiset dated Sept. 15, 1689. In this it is stated emphatically that the Sacred Heart will be our assured refuge at the moment of death, but, in order to be found worthy of such an exceptional blessing, we must have lived in conformity with His holy maxims.[1]

As to the second reward, viz., *the Sacraments*, it is admitted on all sides that they are only of secondary consideration, in case the first reward, viz., the grace of final repentance, has already been granted. If during the period intervening between the completion of the Nine Fridays and the hour of death one fell from the grace of God,

[1] "Il leur sera un asile assuré à l'heure de la mort, pour les recevoir et les défendre de leurs ennemis, mais pour cela, il faut vivre conformément à ses saintes maximes." (BACHELET, *Etudes Rel.*, vol. LXXXVIII, p. 392.)

the grace of final repentance will unquestionably suffice to make his salvation sure. Therefore, we cannot expect, either in justice or right, such superrogatory benefits from God as the reception of the Sacraments would be. in case the grace of final repentance has already been bestowed. If, however, the circumstances be such as to necessitate the actual reception of the Sacrament of penance, as the only means through the instrumentality of which one could be restored to the grace of God, then the text of the *Great Promise* would seem to authorize us to humbly expect its reception. Whether this sacrament is conferred on us actually, when within reach, or passively, by ardent desire, when out of reach, in the final analysis, the result is practically the same, viz., the justification of man. The sentiments of fervor and divine charity arising within the sinful soul, combined with the desire of an actual reception of this Sacrament will suffice in the sight of God to make us worthy of our glorious destiny. The same is to be said concerning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. The assurance given as to its reception amounts to only as much as our spiritual condition in our last struggle will require in order to attain the end for which we are created. We need not concern ourselves about the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, since it does not directly affect our salvation at the moment under consideration.

The same care which we pointed out in connection with the first reward is to be exercised when we preach on the second, viz., the Sacraments. The revelation contained in the *Great Promise* is far from being a certainty. The tendency to misinterpret it, the danger of magnifying its efficacy, and becoming thereby too hopeful of salvation, is manifest to all. To give utterance to statements that convey the idea of an unquestioned reception of the Sacraments of the dying, whether actually or passively, is not justified by the knowledge we thus far possess of the Twelfth Promise.

From the contents of the *Great Promise* it is clear that this revelation was made to give mankind an additional help of salvation, and not intended to supersede the existing Christian economy. There is no warrant for the opinion of those who invest the received rewards with such far-reaching efficacy as to merit for us the Beatific Vision immediately after death. They cannot prove this supposition of a maximum reward which would dispense one from the necessity of undergoing even a temporary purification in Purgatory. Such a belief is unduly exaggerated. The opinion of a minimum retribution is far more warrantable in our estimation. The reward will be adapted to our spiritual condition and needs at the moment of death, but it will be sufficient to secure our salvation. The possibility of a temporary suffering to which we might have to submit after death should not be excluded. The text of the *Great Promise* does not warrant the assurance of a recompense so superabundant as one would have to assume in order to justify the above belief.

Notwithstanding the fact that Father Vermeersch is an advocate of the third mode of interpretation, he does not believe that the *Great Promise* should be preached in that sense. It is not to be represented, he says, as a piece of money which is calculated to purchase for us eternal salvation.[1] Furthermore, he admonishes all the preachers that they have to weigh their statements with care and exactness on account of the delicateness of the question, lest the hearers undervalue the merit of the effort to be made by all in working out the end for which we are created. Therefore, they are to avoid such expressions as the following: *In order to save your soul, in order to obtain an infinite happiness, our Lord asks you for*

[1] "Nous ne saurions d'abord nous élever avec assez de force contre un genre de prédication, où la pratique des neuf vendredis prendrait l'air d'une monnaie avec laquelle on achète le paradis." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. III, p. 243.)

only one hour for nine months.[1] Again, he does not approve of preaching on this promise isolatedly from, but rather conjointly with the one of which it is the outgrowth, viz., the reparatory first Friday Communions.[2]

Comparing these latter statements with those that precede them, we fear that many a theologian would reproach Father Vermeersch with inconsistency. If he be a believer in the third mode of interpretation, as his work clearly indicates, why should he hesitate to present the Twelfth Promise to the people in the light consistent with his views and convictions? Several others have done so irrespective of the harmful consequences which their interpretation was likely to bring in its wake. But it is precisely these deplorable results which Father Vermeersch wishes to obviate by taking so many and such judicious precautionary measures. His good judgment would not permit him to state publicly that Christ in a private revelation, the historicity of which is yet to be proved, superseded His whole public revelation, offering an assurance of salvation in the former which He does not offer in the latter. Again, there is hardly any reason, as far as human judgment goes, why the salvation of souls should be made considerably easier and more certain since 1688 than it had been up to that time.

If it were ascertainable that the third mode of interpretation is the correct one, then would be logical the conclusion of the spiritual

[1] "Ces distinctions peuvent paraître délicates, Raison de plus, pour peser nos expressions et éviter celles qui risquent d'être travesties en dispense d'effort et de labeur. Ne disons jamais en termes équivalents: "Voyez comme il en coûte de se faire une position ici-bas. Pour sauver votre âme, pour obtenir un bonheur sans fin, Notre Seigneur vous demande une seule heure pendant neuf mois." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. III, pp. 244 and 245.)

[2] "Nous ajouterons encore, qu'il convient peu, à notre sens, de prêcher isolément la Grande Promesse. Elle n'est pas faite pour elle-même, mais elle fut proposée par Notre-Seigneur comme un encouragement à la communion réparatrice du premier vendredi." (VERMEERSCH, *op. cit.*, tom. II, ch. III, art. III, p. 247.)

writer who censures and qualifies as inexcusable all those who fail to assure themselves of their glorious destiny by seizing this plank of salvation in the turbulent sea of life where every one is seriously exposed to the jeopardy of spiritual shipwreck.[1] But as it is, no confessor is authorized to reprimand his penitent because he neg-neglects to avail himself of such an opportunity, nor is any one bound to make use of the *Great Promise* to promote his spiritual welfare.

The fact that up to the present the Church has failed to take official cognizance of it is by no means inconsequential. This ought to be borne in mind every time we speak on this subject. Granting that not the slightest misgiving could be entertained as to any factor connected with the Twelfth Promise, *i. e.*, that the fact of the revelation, the authenticity of the letter, the wording of the formula, were all ascertainable without doubt, even then it is questionable whether we could attribute to it the efficacy with which the advocates of the third mode of interpretation invest it, in the absence of an authoritative pronouncement on the part of the Church to that effect. If the *Great Promise* could actually promote our salvation to the extent claimed, how many would be willing to exculpate our holy Mother, the Church, from the sinful negligence of which she would undoubtedly be guilty by failing to present it officially before her children?

Furthermore, if its efficacy were as unquestionable as represented, would any sensible Catholic fail to have recourse to such an inestimable means of safeguarding his salvation? Does not the *Sensus Catholicus* shrink from accepting such an interpretation unconditionally and without a sufficient warrant? Only uncommon

[1] "Qu'ils seraient inexcusables ceux qui laisseraient de côté cette planche de salut, offerte par l'amour infini de ce divin Coeur." (*Catéchisme de la dévotion au Sacré Coeur,* Chapelain de Montmartre, Part. VI, Sec. VI, p. 255.)

reason could have induced Christ to make such an extraordinary promise or manifest such a revelation. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to say that, had He intended to endow it with that absolute and infallible efficacy, He would also have exercised His divine Providence towards preserving such evidence of it that it would not fail to have a rightful claim to credibility. If He deemed it necessary to reveal the *Great Promise* He surely would have used the requisite means to perpetuate the same in a form more calculated to win assent

These are only some of the many difficulties that naturally present themselves as irreconcilable with the third mode of interpretation. Being aware of the many dangers which may follow in its wake, it is advisable to advocate an interpretation which can compromise neither the Church, nor the flock, nor the exponent, and yet has as much claim to acceptance as any other. To advocate the absolute and infallible efficacy of the *Great Promise* is equivalent to running the risk of inevitably giving rise to material superstition, and perhaps even scandal, though, by being indulgent, it may be conceded that such cases might be only sporadic and unfrequent. It is, therefore, this particular phase of the Twelfth Promise that must needs undergo a slight modification in order to eliminate the danger which might be occasioned by it.

Nor is there any particular advantage in such a sweeping interpretation. The ways of God are inscrutable, and, as already pointed out in a previous chapter, the truth of such an interpretation cannot be put adequately to the test. If God in His infinite mercy and love actually wishes to attach such a merit to our nine Holy Communions, received on nine successive first Fridays of

the month, then we shall reap the full share of such a spiritual benefit without fail. But if, on the other hand, this be only an exaggerated illusion, then we are disseminating an erroneous notion in the true fold, in consequence of which an unusual recompense is anticipated which might never materialize. Would it not be, therefore, advisable from the standpoint of good judgment and expediency to accept the *Great Promise* as modified by Bishop Languet? The text itself would not necessarily have to undergo a change. The words: *En lui faisant esperer* would eradicate the old, widespread, erroneous and exaggerated ideas, and would be supplanted by an interpretation more justifiable and practical than any which can be had at present.

In conclusion it may be well to state again that the Church has not, as yet, expressed a preference for any particular interpretation given to the text of the *Great Promise*. Such being the case, one may accept any view, provided it be reconcilable with sound theological principles. The purpose of a devotion is to serve as a means whereby an intimate inter-communion may be established between the soul and her Creator, thus to help the former in the attainment of her end. Therefore, any factor that either retards the soul in her progress or threatens to mislead her must be eliminated from the devotion. For this reason one should abstain from presenting the *Great Promise* to the people in the light of an interpretation which advocates an absolute right to the promised graces, or gives an unquestioned assurance of their infallible fulfilment. Such statements must be considerably modified and toned down.

It may be admitted that there are some reasons justifying a belief in the revelation recorded by the letter in question. But, on the

other hand, it must also be borne in mind that the historicity of the above document is doubtful. Even if one were willing to accept a revelation of such nature the difficulty involved in the determination of the authentic wording would remain unsolved. Hence, prudence and good judgment would dictate great caution when speaking on the efficacy of the Twelfth Promise. Unless the Church gives a different interpretation one is not justified in going further than to state that the fulfillment of the promised graces may be humbly expected by all who with the proper dispositions receive Holy Communion for nine consecutive first Fridays of the month.

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DEUS LUX MEA.

THESES

QUAS,

AD DOCTORATUM

IN

SACRA THEOLOGIA

Apud Universitatem Catholicam Americae

CONSEQUENDUM,

PUBLICE PROPUGNABIT

IOSEPHUS IULIUS CAROLUS PETROVITS, S. T. L.

IX HORA A. M. DIE VIII IUNII A. D. MCMXVII.

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Washingtonii, D. C.

S. Facultas Theologica,

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No. 10.

THESES

I.

Opinio quae tenet cultum Sacratissimi Cordis Iesu a Beata Maria Margarita Alacoque introductum fuisse, historico fundamento caret.

II.

In Sacratissimi Cordis devotione Cor Jesu est quasi centrum cultus; ergo amor sive sit creatus sive increatus, semper inseparabilis a Persona Christi consideratur.

III.

Argumenta quae ad amorem increatum in cultu Sacratissimi Cordis includendum adducuntur, tamquam persuasiva iure merito habentur.

IV.

In cultu Sacratissimi Cordis amor increatus non est considerandus ac si contineret plenitudinem amoris in tribus divinis Personis SS. Trinitatis existentis, neque potest esse primarius ratione temporis.

V.

Ex nonnullis factis intime connexis cum Promission XII, dubitatur utrum omnia verba quibus formula promissionis componitur et quae proponuntur tamquam Beatae Mariae Margaritae Alacoque, authentica sint.

VI.

Illi omnes qui tenent gratiam in Promissione XII promissam titulo meriti ex ilustitia deberi, condemnandi sunt tamquam doctrinam contra sensum Scripturae et Ecclesiae disseminantes.

VII.

Interpretatio Promissionis XII prout in dissertatione proposita, tamquam doctrinae et sensui catholico conformis, sustinetur et vindicatur.

VIII.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart has its solid foundation in generally accepted principles of Christology and Soteriology, and not, as some maintain, in the controverted revelations to Blessed Margaret Mary.

IX.

The formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is clearly defined, not only in the writings of its early exponents, but also in the decrees of the Sacred Congregations as well as the decisions rendered by the various Pontiffs.

X.

The two objects of the devotion to the Sacred Heart must be considered *ad modum unius;* either of them may be primary or secondary when viewed *ratione temporis,* but *ratione excellentiae* love is the primary object.

XI.

Since the divine Person subsists in the human body of Christ, we contend, against the Jansenists, that His physical Heart is the material object of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and as such is deserving of the cult of latria.

XII.

Three states can be distinguished of the real body of Christ; therefore, the Heart and love corresponding to these states individually must constitute the material and the formal object of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

XIII.

There is a sufficient warrant for the symbolism involved in the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, notwithstanding the fact that the functions which were formerly attributed to the Heart are, by modern physiologists, assigned to the brain.

XIV.

In the Old Covenant the word heart symbolized the love of God; in common parlance it symbolizes all the love of a person; therefore, in the Devotion to the Sacred Heart its symbolism should not be restricted to the created love of Christ.

XV.

The arguments adduced in favor of the historicity of the letter through which the *Great Promise* has been circulated are inconclusive, and many objections raised against its authenticity cannot be satisfactorily answered.

XVI.

Many factors intimately connected with the *Great Promise* militate against the acceptance of the views of those who are classified as advocates of third mode of interpretation.

XVII.

Hedonism must be rejected because it is founded on untenable principles subversive of the true end of man.

XVIII.

The moral law viewed objectively is not subject to evolution; we may admit, however, that the applications of the primary principles to individual acts may vary.

XIX.

Norma proxima discriminans actiones humanas rectas a pravis est ipsa humana natura rationalis adaequate spectata, remota autem norma est divina essentia.

XX.

Lex naturalis ita est promulgata ut eius principia ignorari non possint; de praeceptis autem mediatis potest esse aliqua ignorantia.

XXI.

Duellum sub titulo satisfactionis pro laeso honore susceptum legi naturali repugnat, ideoque semper illicitum est.

XXII.

Effectus malus, quem praeter intentionem ex actione sua secuturum agens praevidit, huic imputari nequit, quoties illud impedire non teneatur.

XXIII.

Parentes ad suorum liberorum educationem stricto naturali officio tenentur, et munus illos educandi, qua naturale est, exclusivo iure sibi vindicare possunt.

XXIV.

Bellum in se consideratum naturaliter prohibitum censeri nequit, attamen ad id licite suscipiendum nonnullae conditiones requiruntur.

XXV.

Civili potestati circa scholarem institutionem puerorum duplex cooperatio ex officio competit, altera negativa, quae in publica iurium, etiam personalium, tutela consistit, altera positiva, sed externa et subsidiaria, quatenus ad fundandas et sustentandas scholas necessarias socialis spontaneitas oneri publico impar succursu indigeat.

XXVI.

Spectatis dogmatum christianorum origine, natura atque profectu, nihil est quod suadeat ea eo modo orta esse ac crevisse, quem moderni ac modernistae in medium afferre solent.

XXVII.

Ea quae nuperrime urgent modernistae contra argumentum Sancti Thomae ex motu desumptum, procedumt vel ex ignorantia elenchi, vel ex placitis gratuitis evolutionis monisticae quam profitentur.

XXVIII.

Doctrina Concilii Vaticani, iuxta quam humanae rationi recte evolutae adscribitur potentia physica, ad Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, ex rebus creatis certo cognoscendum, exponitur ac defenditur.

XXIX.

Divinitas Iesu Christi ex Evangeliis probatur, ac proinde non est dogma quod conscientia Christiana ex notione Messiae deduxit.

XXX.

Ex contingentia rerum argui legitime potest ad existentiam Entis Necessarii, quidquid in contarium urgeant modernistae.

XXXI.

Iesus cum ministerium suum exercebat, in eum finem loquebatur ut doceret se esse Messiam, atque eius miracula eo spectabant ut id demonstrarent.

XXXII.

Unigeniti Incarnatio non fuit absolute necessaria, quia satisfactio iustitiae non est obligatio divinae voluntati imposita, sed libera potius electio ab hac eadem voluntate executioni demandata.

XXXIII.

Non in concupiscentia, sed in privatione vitae supernaturalis sita est pecati originalis essentia.

XXXIV.

Humanitas Christi, ut res honorata, adoranda est cultu latriae; sed ut ratio honoris, cultu hyperduliae.

XXXV.

Cultus Sacratissimi Cordis Iesu tum verus tum conveniens affirmandus est.

XXXVI.

Forma servanda in matrimonio et sponsalibus continetur in decreto *"Ne Temere."*

XXXVII.

Personae distinguuntur ratione Rituum. Decretis particularibus ritus ruthenus moderatur in Statibus Foederatis Americae Septentrionalis.

XXXVIII.

Duplex elementum requiritur ad acquirendum domicilium vel Quasi-Domicilium, elementum materiale et spirituale.

XXXIX.

Persona baptizata et non baptizata matrimonium valide contrahi nequeunt propter impedimentum disparitatis cultus.

XL.

Modus eligendi Episcopos in Statibus Foederatis Americae Septentrionalis determinatur in decreto Congregationis Consistorialis data die 3 Nov., 1916.

XLI.

Ad consequendum remissionem peccatorum mortalium post baptismum commissorum iure divino est necessaria specifica corumdem confessio facta legitimo paenitentiae ministro.

XLII.

Consecratio eatenus habet rationem actionis sacrificialis quatenus per eam producitur Christus in statu mysticae mactationis, dum vi verborum corpus et sanguis Christi separatim ponuntur sub speciebus panis et vini, et hac ratione mactatio cruenta in cruce facta Deo offertur.

XLIII.

Cultus erga Sacratissimum Cor Iesu in Eucharistia non est perfectior cultu erga ipsam Eucharistiam neque alius a cultu erga Sacratissimum Cor Iesu.[1]

XLIV.

Proprietas essentialis matrimonii christiani consummati est eius indissolubilitas etiam in casu adulterii.

XLV.

Ecclesia potest statuere impedimenta matrimonium dirimentia et ad eius tribunal spectant causae matrimoniales, quae respiciunt ipsum matrimonii vinculum.

XLVI.

Determinism in the moral order falls to the ground under the weight of the arguments adduced from the testimony of conscience, and from the analysis of the act of choosing what we shall do and what we shall not do.

XLVII.

The arguments drawn from the consent of mankind, from the spirituality of the soul, from our tendency towards happiness, and from our moral life, justify the world-wide belief in the immortality of the soul.

XLVIII.

The reality of Christ's bodily Resurrection is made certain by the fact that, from the very beginning, the Apostles taught, and insisted on the belief that Christ was truly risen from the dead.

XLIX.

No Church can lay claim to apostolicity unless it is in communion with the See of Peter.

[1] Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 1915, vol. VII, p. 205.

L.

Within the scope of Church infallibility are included not only whatsoever things Christ has revealed, but also the truths of the natural order, the denial of which could logically lead to the rejection of any revealed doctrine.

LI.

The passage in Phil., II, 2-6, if viewed in the light of the interpretation given to it by the Latin Patristic Literature, brands as erroneous the opinions of those modern *Kenoticists* who regard the *Kenosis* as a real surrender of the *"forma Dei"* for the *"forma servi."*

LII.

Considering the Jewish tradition, the term *"Son of man"* as used by Christ is a Messianic title, and is to be referred to Daniel VII, 13.

LIII.

The passage in the Synoptics, Matt., XI, 27, and Luke X, 22, as critically established against Harnack and Loisy, gives positive proof that Christ knew and taught His divinity.

LIV.

From external evidence it is possible to prove the Mosaic authorship of the book of Pentateuch in the sense in which it was interpreted by the decisions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission dated June 7, 1906.

LV.

The opinion may be accepted that in no sense are we bound to believe that Solomon was actually the author of the book of Ecclesiastes.

LVI.

Against Schröck and Fuchs we maintain that Cyril of Alexandria has not departed from orthodoxy, hence, the controversy between him and Nestorius was not a mere logomachy, but it touched the kernel of Christianity.

LVIII.

The unjust interference of civil authority was instrumental in creating and maintaining for a long time the opposition which we know to have existed between the Antiochene Bishops and the Fathers of the Oecumenical Council of Ephesus.

LVIII.

There is insufficient historical evidence to prove that Cyril of Alexandria and his friends induced the court to accept their views by having had recourse to bribery.

LIX.

The Reformation in Germany was as much a political movement as a religious upheaval, and both must be taken into account in explaining its rapid growth.

LX.

Instead of remedying the existing religious evils the doctrine of Luther augmented them and rendered the real reform more difficult of achievement.

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VITA.

Natus sum anno 1886 in Hungariae regno. Literarum elementis in gymnasio Tyrnaviae huius regionis imbutus, annum duodevicesimum agens, in Status Foederatos Americae Septentrionalis perveni. Seminarium ibi Pennsylvaniae Overbrookiense, in tutelam Sancti-Caroli Borromei commissum, frequentavi, ut disciplinis theologicis vacarem; ibidem anna nono huius saeculi ad sacerdotium provectus sum. In ecclesiis deinde, quae ad dioecesim pertinent Harrisburgensem, operam curae animarum navabam et per tres annos paroeciam Sanctae Mariae de Immaculata Conceptione regebam. Postremo in civium huius almae Universitatis numerum anno 1914 adscriptus sum, ubi dd. Melody eiusque successoris Ryan auspiciis theologiae moralis praecipue studiis incubui. Juris insuper canonici et theologiae dogmaticae disciplinis deditus fui, quarum illam Dr. Bernardini hanc Dr. Shanahan me docuit.

His, quos commemoravi, et aliis de me egregie meritis viris doctis, qui summa doctrina atque benevolentia me semper iuverunt, gratias et nunc ago et semper habebo quam possum maximas.